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## TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS

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#### THE TEACHING +> LEARNING PROCESS

# T H E TEACHING↔LEARNING

PROCESS

BY

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INTRODUCTION BY

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Only through the schools can we undo what the schools have done.

-Lecomte du Noüy, Human Destiny

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## Introduction

HERE ARE NUMEROUS ways to learn about the teaching \iff
learning process. One of the most fruitful is to participate in a
series of discussions with a group which includes experienced
teachers and is led by a wise person who knows much about learning and related fields of human experience. "Next best" to participating in such a group is to have an opportunity to read and discuss what was said as the participants tried hard to achieve a
deeper understanding of the dynamics of their work with children.

This volume offers a unique means for pursuing this "next best" approach. To a large degree it was the outgrowth of the author's work with groups of teachers during the period (1951-1952) when he was Visiting Professor of Sociology at Columbia University. Here is how Professor Cantor described what he did:

It occurred to me that one of the best ways to present the teaching ↔ learning process would be to sit down with groups of teachers and candidates for teaching and to discuss, together,

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the problems of teaching. Professor Marcella R. Lawler, of Teachers College, Columbia University, conducted a class in "Supervision in the Improvement of Instruction for Teachers, Supervisors, and Administrators in Elementary and Secondary Schools." As part of the work in this course some of the members of the class accepted my invitation to join a seminar discussion project to explore the theme "The Improvement of Skill in Teaching." Two groups of approximately fifteen members each met once a week for two hours throughout the semester. The entire proceedings were electrically recorded. The protocols in this study are selections from the records.

The readers of this book will find in it a good deal more than the transcripts of the group discussions. They will find most of the ideas about the teaching \interpretate learning process that Professor Cantor considers to be of great significance. The volume is not inductive only. Its essence may be described as the insights and observations of both Professor Cantor and the group as they tried to develop greater sensitivity to the interaction between themselves and their pupils and to intellectualize about its meaning.

Like every scholar who undertakes a group experience of this kind, Professor Cantor emerged a partially changed man. Many of his earlier ideas were reinforced, and many new ones were developed. The central theme of this book is that if learning is to be significant and useful—if it is to make a difference—the learner must want to learn. And in the classroom he will learn that which matters to him to the degree that he does not feel defensive and threatened. The teacher must help him to face his uncertainties, his limitations, and his inadequacies. This is most apt to happen, Professor Cantor believes, when the classroom atmosphere emphasizes acceptance and is reality-centered. In his use of the expression "reality-centered," the author rejects exclusive concern with either the needs of the child or the needs of society. Attention to both, for they are inextricably related, characterizes the classroom that is focused on reality.

Professor Cantor believes, too, that the teacher's functions are limited. To attempt everything confuses both her and her pupils.

This means that she must understand her role as a teacher in order to establish the limits within which she can carry on her professional duties with maximal assurance of success. The creative teacher must understand when and how to challenge her pupils. She accepts the premise that learning is essentially personal and must result from self-motivation and eventuate in self-discipline.

It goes without saying that nobody—least of all Professor Cantor—would maintain that all the ideas in this volume are new or should necessarily be accepted by every reader. The author is a firm believer in differences, and he values them. Anyone who has thought seriously about the teaching \in learning process must realize the value of what happens when a reader finds himself in disagreement with an author. We can often find out what we really think about a body of ideas when our own insights are tested against those of a perceptive and stimulating guide.

There is no doubt in my mind that this book will provide a basis for an unusually meaningful learning experience in a variety of pre-service and in-service education courses.

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Teachers College
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I wish to thank Professor Max R. Brunstetter, Editor of the Teachers College Record, Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, for his kind permission to make use of some of the material

#### xii Acknowledgments

which appeared in my articles "People and Uncertainty" (Dec. 1951), "The Reality-Centered School" (March 1952), and "Focus and Function in Group Discussion" (April 1952). Similarly, I am grateful to the editors of *The Journal of Teacher Education* for permission to draw upon an article by Professor Milton Albrecht and myself, "The Antimony of Evaluation," which appeared in the issue of June 1951.

N. C.

University of Buffalo September 1953

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#### THE TEACHING +> LEARNING PROCESS

#### Introduction

## Partners in Learning

The Morale of the Teacher

The Morale of the Pupils

One Source of Difficulty

The Teaching↔Learning Process

pucational institutions serve as one of the media of passing on traditional values and of introducing new ones. The secondary schools of this country touch our population at the point of the student's greatest opportunity (since a relatively small percentage of our high-school graduates enter college). The direction and quality of American civilization, for good or for evil, are determined, in large measure, through mass communication in the high schools. The high school is the leader and servant of our American community life. The appraisal of fact and the shaping of values and human relationships is peculiarly the responsibility of our secondary-school teachers.

Teachers occupy a highly strategic position in this process of communicating new insights and in building different human relationships. In order to make more effective use of their position, they must develop increased insight into the teaching learning process. Most important of all, the children can be provided with a genuine opportunity to learn if they want to. They will be encouraged to learn if the teachers want to learn how to help them. Pupils and teachers thus become partners in learning.

#### The Morale of the Teacher

How does the average teacher feel about her profession? We teachers want much that the average professional person or any adult wants—namely, economic security, social status, self-esteem, the respect of one's peers, and the satisfaction which accompanies a job well done. The quiet satisfaction accompanying one's own awareness of skill in performance lies within the reach of all teachers except those who have sunk into helpless cynicism.

Like other professionals, the teacher experiences some of the insecurities which many adults in our contemporary society reflect. One source of insecurity lies in the discrepancy between our expectations and their fulfillment. As teachers, we expect to be consid-

ered "professionals" and to receive the respect which accompanies professional practice. Sometimes we are disappointed in the rate of pay and salary increments. Mandatory increases are often delayed, awaiting local or state legislation. School budgets are among the first to be cut; requested increases which seem imperative are turned down. Parents do not seem to be vitally concerned with the relatively poor pay of teachers or with the need for any more essential educational services.

Often our superiors appear distant, unsympathetic, or unpredictable. Our hopes are raised only to be dispelled; promises are violated almost as often as they are made. Then, too, our training did not prepare us fully to meet the psychological realities of many of our classrooms. Instead of twenty or thirty pupils, we often discover thirty-five and sometimes fifty or more crowded into undersized and physically inadequate classrooms. We become somewhat disheartened over the lack of interest shown by our pupils. Much of our time is taken up with problems of "discipline." We seem to be inundated with paper work, keeping of records, correction of papers, and committee work.

What does the student in the state teachers' college or school of education think and feel during the daily round of sessions? The textbooks, one after another, repeat the threadbare platitudes about teaching democracy in the classroom, curriculum building, respecting individual differences, the needs of the pupils, the core program, training for democratic citizenship, the place of art in education, and so on. Student practice teaching, too often, is not a creative experience during which the candidate is warmly and understandingly helped to discover her capacities, strengths, and weaknesses. It is merely a requirement one must satisfy. Lectures are attended without vital attention; notes are taken without zest. The traditional teacher-training programs tell us what and how to teach, but, in the main, they rarely help us learn how to teach.

This picture is, of course, somewhat exaggerated. There are many kinds of teachers' colleges, and many excellent faculty members as well; there are teacher candidates who assuredly profit from their experiences in the teachers' colleges. Is it not generally true,

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however, that too many of us, after several years of teaching, become enmeshed in the bureaucracy of the school structure? Is it not a fact that our creative capacities tend to become dissipated and dulled? Does teaching, for most of us, continue to be the exciting adventure we thought it was to be, or does it become a routine job? Do some of us who no longer teach creatively try to justify our performance? We have plenty of scapegoats. We can criticize conditions, salaries, superiors, pupils, parents, and school boards.

The criticisms, often enough, are valid, being supported by fact. But are they frequently made by the critic to protect himself against self-criticism? Do we sometimes refuse to assume the risks of responsible challenge? Do we say we cannot do a better job when we mean that we will not because the professional risks are too great or the personal growth involved too demanding? This unhappy state of affairs for the teachers is equally unhappy for the pupils.

#### The Morale of the Pupils

How well do we teachers understand the inner lives of our school children? Local community, national, and international conditions are changing so precipitously that even the present candidates for teaching will not have experienced, in many respects, the same world as the children they are to teach. How different are the interests of present school children from the interests we had as children? Is the generalization unwarranted that most of the pupils in the secondary schools today are not excited about or genuinely concerned with their school work and subject matter?

For the pupils in the upper grades, the gaps between what the teachers and the texts say and what they hear at home, read about in papers, hear on the radio, or observe on television or at the movies make us teachers appear as either romantics or cynics. The world in which our pupils are undergoing their most vital experiences is not the classroom but their daily life outside the classroom. This, doubtlessly, has always been the case but probably not to the degree to which it is true today. The modern world of adults has never been so confused or the future so uncertain. Our attitudes, inevitably, are reflected in our children and pupils.

Suppose we tried to answer the question: What are the boys and girls between the ages of twelve and sixteen really concerned with as they sit in our classes day after day "dealing" with the data we present? Of course, there is no one answer. If we had greater understanding of the inner lives of the children, we'd probably perceive many different kinds of problems. The general conclusion, for our purpose, could be drawn that the majority was not concerned with what we are concerned with.

#### One Source of Difficulty

The morale of the teachers affects the pupils and the morale of the pupils affects the teachers. What, fundamentally, is wrong? Only a genius or a fool would dare to give a conclusive answer to the question.

We have already indicated several directions in which answers are to be sought. No fair-minded observer can deny the frustrating limitations and irritations in the professional life of the average teacher and their effect on the teacher's morale. The morale of the pupil is affected by the difference in quality between his classroom experiences and his nonschool activities. All this is quite obvious. One factor in the situation which is less obvious, however, is the teaching \(\infty\) learning process. An examination of this process may lead to the discovery that the morale of both teacher and pupils can be improved significantly if changes are made.

The teaching \iff learning process has not been and, generally, is not now being presented in teachers' colleges or schools of education in the realistic manner made possible by the development of clinical psychology—that is, by the insights derived from the fields of psychiatry, mental hygiene, social work, guidance clinics, and counseling.

The kind of teaching tearning we shall be concerned

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with has to do with helping teachers gain a better understanding of and insight into human relations. The teaching of specific skills or subjects is not our concern here, although the analysis has a direct bearing upon the ways in which specific subject matter can be presented. "Our teachers must . . . be specifically qualified to teach human relations. . . . Children would learn more from such a teacher than from all the factually informed instructors in the world." 1

Most teachers want to do a better job. They possess wells of untapped creativity. These can be reached if teachers can be helped to see a new conception of the teaching \(\infty\) learning process, for them as well as for their pupils. The candidates for teaching are, perhaps, in a more favorable position than in-service teachers in that they will not have the struggle of unlearning unfortunate techniques which tend to become axiomatic by force of settled habit. "If they can be helped to see a new conception of the teaching \(\infty\) learning process" is the pivotal problem. How does one learn to see?

The present volume tries to contribute to an answer to this question—that is, it represents an intellectual description of some of the important processes which occur during learning. Learning to see, however, requires more than intellectual acceptance. It requires struggling through to a series of insights which gradually take hold of one's whole being. No one can do this for another person.

The reader may wonder why we have emphasized "struggle." Becoming a teacher involves more than attending lectures and reading books. Those of us who wish to continue growing and developing may find it necessary gradually to transform our previously accepted orientations regarding such matters as disciplinary problems, lectures, textbooks, assignments, tests, grades, supervisors, and curriculums. In addition, we are challenged by the difficult problem of modifying our outlook on life, society, the nature of self, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> All numbered footnotes refer to the corresponding items in the bibliography at the end of each chapter.

the universe in accord with contemporary knowledge. (See Chaps. 13 and 14.)

The reader's acceptance of our views regarding the position the teacher should reach in the process of continuous reorientation must be, of course, a matter of his own responsibility. The effort to assimilate the contemporary approach to teaching, however, will involve a willingness:

- 1. to be convinced of the logic and evidence for the new conceptions,
- 2. to accept the discomfort accompanying the gradual assimilation of ideas leading to a different orientation,
- 3. to arrive at a deeper understanding of personality development, and
- 4. to modify one's view of life and self.

Our goal is not a single one, and it is not reached once and for all. There are no final formulations, but there are many implications for growth. Those of us—and the number is increasing—who have been privileged to work closely with practicing teachers and students in the teachers' colleges have already witnessed remarkable growth and even radical change.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Teaching ↔ Learning Process

In our effort to describe certain aspects of the teaching  $\Leftrightarrow$  learning process, we shall make frequent use of the verbatim reports of several seminars led by the author. Many books talk about and around the teaching  $\Leftrightarrow$  learning process. Their conclusions generally take the form of intellectual statements to which teachers, often, give only lip service. The seminar procedure, on the other hand, brings us to the bedrock experience of teachers and candidates for teaching engaged in the teaching  $\Leftrightarrow$  learning process. We can

stand aside and listen to what the teachers tell us about their feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. We can read their own explanations of why they teach in a certain way, why they use certain procedures, what they think about themselves, their superiors, and their pupils. We can observe their movement and growth from a mechanical, routinized approach to teaching to a more insightful method.

The seminar procedure is used because it helps us to understand the teaching ⇔learning process in certain ways as no other procedure has enabled us to do in the past. As one of the members of our seminar group expressed it, "The kind of thing we are doing here isn't done in colleges. We're learning by examples. I mean, we're living through what we're talking about, and that way we catch something of what our words mean" (see p. 152).

The protocols of the students are used not in order to demonstrate the discussion technique of teaching graduate students or to show how much the participants derived from participating in discussion. Rather, they are used so that teachers and teachers-intraining may be helped to obtain a realistic grasp of the teaching \in learning process. The seminar procedures employed by the author—the ways in which the meetings are structured and guided—are in no way offered as models for elementary and high-school teachers to follow in teaching arithmetic, chemistry, social studies, or any other subject. Some readers of the book may already be employing certain of the procedures. Others may learn something of value for an approach different from that now used by them.

Teaching that has as its aim the improvement of self-understanding and interpersonal understanding of pupils is certainly strongly affected by the self-understanding of the teacher. This is not the only kind of teaching that goes on. However, we are focusing upon this kind of "human relationships" teaching. We are primarily interested in the personal factors which are at the core of the teaching \iff learning process. The seminar procedure, we repeat, is used only because it gives us the unique opportunity of touching at the very quick of our interest.

Our own experiences, as we met with groups of teachers dur-

ing the year, certainly had a healthful effect upon the readiness with which we were prepared to criticize teaching performance. We were again made aware of the overcrowded classrooms, insufficient budgets for materials and supplies, extracurricular duties, onerous paper work, and poor physical equipment. We learned to appreciate the teacher's very real problem of being torn between doing what she believed should be done and doing what parents or superiors or both expected her to do (see p. 28).

We learned to appreciate the common-sense approach with which the ordinary teacher finds her way through the pressures surrounding her on all sides. Our respect for teachers-in-training increased as we discerned their critical appraisal of what the colleges were offering them. We learned, above all else, that the complex problems of teaching and learning and the limitations within which we carry on our professional teaching activity do not permit of any simple or single answer or even a series of formulas.

The recognition of limitations, however, must not be converted into justification for ineffective teaching. Although thousands of teachers have ceased to be vitally involved in their performance, they nevertheless possess vitality. Teachers have become bored with tiresome clichés, threadbare formulas, and formal generalizations which bear little resemblance to the living realities of classroom activities, their own and the students'. Our chief purpose here, as we have said, is to present a more realistic and vital approach to skilled teaching. We are convinced that the average teacher can be helped to find more creative satisfaction in her work.

The teacher can be helped to discover one source of ineffective teaching practices, to understand more clearly what is involved in genuine teaching, to acquire deeper insight into the meaning of professional growth. The teacher who wants to make the effort will, we hope, recapture the enthusiasm and excitement which make fine teaching the creative profession it is.

Part One, "The Current Practice," describes the prevailing orientation of most teachers in the American elementary and secondary schools. There is, of course, no such thing as the tradition of teaching or the traditional teacher or the traditional conception

of education. In New York City, within a mile from each other, there are excellent modern school administrators and dry-rot leaders, skillful teachers and keepers of the texts. A tremendous amount of self-criticism, curriculum experimentation, in-service development, and outside consultant service is going on in many parts of the country. We shall describe, however, the kind of orientation and orthodox practices that most teachers will recognize because they now operate, more or less, within this framework.

Part Two, "The Teaching \( \int \) Learning Process," attempts to communicate some of the newer insights and to show how they can be applied in the actual teaching \( \int \) learning situation.

Part Three, "New Light in Teaching," attempts to generalize the seminar discussions and to delineate the characteristics of the different kind of professional teacher we envisage. In addition, it draws together the propositions which support the newer approach to teaching. Some readers may prefer to study Part Three before Part Two in order to become acquainted with the generalizations first so that the material in Part Two is seen in clearer perspective. In any case, both Parts should be considered together to obtain an over-all view of the teaching \(\infty\) learning process.

Part Four, "New Teachers for a New World," requires a special explanation. It seems to be a peroration even though it appears unrelated to the preceding parts of the book. No technique is better than the person employing it. The teaching ⇔learning process, in the final analysis, is a technique applied by a teacher. The teacher operates as a technician, but she is more than a technician. She is a person committed to a philosophy of education, to certain moral, religious, social, political, esthetic, and economic values, whether she is consciously and critically aware of them or not.

We firmly believe that the teaching profession rests on a moral base. The nature of that moral commitment can be explored so that the teacher clearly realizes what he stands for. The teaching \iff learning process described in this volume will be effectively employed by those teachers who become increasingly aware of the moral responsibility attached to their profession. What the teacher

basically believes often "communicates" itself in ways too subtle for language to capture.

In one sense the material in Part Four does not concern itself directly with the central thesis of the book—namely, the teaching  $\leftrightarrow$  learning process. In another sense, however, this material is basic to an understanding of the rationale of the different approach to learning described here.

In effect we present, in broad outline, a philosophy of education for teachers in a democratic society. The reader need not agree with some or a majority of the *specific* conclusions, but we feel confident that most readers will be in agreement with the moral assumptions implied and expressed.

In the last section, moreover, we attempt to describe some of the major shifts in American civilization with which some of us are not sufficiently familiar. Most of us realize that Western society is undergoing radical transformations. Fewer, perhaps, appreciate the extent and nature of these changes. Better ordering of our perspectives concerning the new world in the making illuminates the urgency of a different approach to learning and, conceivably, enlists our efforts to realize it.

#### Selected Bibliography

<sup>1</sup> Montagu, W. F. Ashley. On Being Human. New York: Henry Schuman, 1951, p. 111. A well-known physical anthropologist develops the idea that "cooperation" is a fundamental characteristic of human behavior, thus qualifying the Darwinian belief in survival of the physically more fit.

<sup>2</sup> The following list of studies provides an over-all view of many recent developments in newer *methods* of dealing with class-room materials as well as with the philosophical and psychological premises supporting the new positions.

Professors Kelley and Rasey are members of the faculty of the

Wayne University School of Education. The three small volumes cited immediately below will serve as a good introduction to the importance of starting to teach where the students are.

Kelley, Earl. Education for What Is Real. New York: Harper and Bros., 1947.

Rasey, Marion. This Is Teaching. New York: Harper and Bros., 1950.

Kelley, Earl, and Rasey, Marion. Education and the Nature of Man. New York: Harper and Bros., 1952. This study summarizes important findings in biology, physiology, and the social sciences in so far as they have implications for an educational philosophy. Part Three, "The Problem of Evidence," lists a valuable selected bibliography.

Sharp, George. Curriculum Development as Re-education of the Teacher. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951. Dr. Sharp, the "Curriculum Coordinator" of a high school in New Jersey, discusses the problems involved in communication between various members of a school staff.

Raup, B., Axtelle, G. E., Benne, K. D., and Smith, O. B. The Improvement of Practical Intelligence. New York: Harper and Bros., 1950. These four well-known teachers' college educators spent many months together discussing the philosophic and social foundations of education. This volume, a product of those meetings, deals critically with communication based upon rational grounds. It is not easy to read but is worth all the effort one wishes to bring to its study.

Brameld, Theodore. Ends and Means in Education. New York: Harper and Bros., 1950. An important analysis of the basis of modern education.

Taylor, Harold. Essays in Teaching. New York: Harper and Bros., 1950. The President of Sarah Lawrence College and members of the faculty describe the procedures, methods, and philosophy underlying the General Education program at one of our outstanding women's colleges.

Rogers, Carl. Client-Centered Psychotherapy. New York:

Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950. This book is the most comprehensive account of Dr. Rogers' views regarding therapeutic counseling. Chapter 9, on the implications for education, will be of most direct interest to teachers. Pages 160-167 contain an eloquent description of the feelings of a person who wants to offer professional help to another.

Cantor, Nathaniel. The Dynamics of Learning. Buffalo: Foster and Stewart, 2d Ed., 1950. A study of the learning process based on students' written reports and class discussions, this book examines the teaching ⇔learning process primarily from the student's point of view, whereas the present volume examines the same process primarily from the point of view of the teacher.

Mitchell, Lucy Sprague. Our Children and Our Schools. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951. This is an account of the famous Bank Street School's work in the development of curriculum and in the development of teachers. The New York City Board of Education was so impressed by this private group's results that it asked for a demonstration in several public schools in New York City. This is also described in the study. Here the reader can observe how a group of teachers proceeded to develop curriculums in various areas for different age groups and how they helped other teachers, to whom much of this was strange, to acquire confidence to do likewise. For teachers who find it easy to say, "This is all very fine talk, but try and do some of it," this book is made to order.

Benne, Kenneth D., and Muntyan, Bozidar. Human Relations in Curriculum Change. New York: Dryden Press, 1951. The authors, associated with the College of Education, University of Illinois, share the view of George Sharp that genuine changes in curriculum programs mean changes in the relationships between personnel responsible for introducing and carrying out such changes. This collection of selected readings with especial emphasis on group development brings into one place many of the articles on group methods, group dynamics, how groups can gain effective productivity, and the development of group leadership. The writings of the country's leaders in group dynamics are represented in this selection.

#### 14 Introduction

Rugg, Harold. The Teacher of Teachers. New York: Harper and Bros., 1952. The subtitle, "Frontiers of theory and practice in teacher education," does not indicate the richness and depth of this work of one of the country's outstanding educators. Professor Rugg traces the history of the development of teacher education, in which he played an important role during a lifetime of teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University, and shows the impact of technological change on educational practice. This volume is a comprehensive account of the current philosophy of education held by those teachers of teachers who agree that basic creative reconstruction of American life needs to be undertaken. The appendix contains an annotated list of selected readings organized in terms of the social, historical, biopsychological, esthetic, and philosophical foundations of education.

#### 

#### Part I

### THE CURRENT PRACTICE

# The Matrix of the Classroom Atmosphere

The Authoritarian Classroom

The Evils of Traditional Controls

Parental Authority

Avoiding Challenge

The Teacher's Use of Authority

Problems for Discussion

A Self-insight Scale

Lila (High-school Supervisor): This winter, as a consequence of staff illness, I taught several special classes. I discovered that many pupils who knew correct solutions of problems were afraid to offer them. Pupil after pupil displayed such a fear of failure and reluctance to speak that one could almost touch the tenseness in the room. There was almost no self-confidence or self-trust. I don't think any learning could possibly result from such insecurity. I am truly sorry for the children who must experience this atmosphere almost every day of their school life. Without a permissive learning situation, genuine learning outcomes, I am now convinced, are impossible.

OME CLASSROOMS reflect a joyous atmosphere; in others the atmosphere is charged with tension and hostility. Why? The answer is not simple. The atmosphere may be a product of the physical surroundings, the number of students in the class, the heterogeneity of interests, the specific curriculum, and the socioeconomic levels of teacher and pupils. But probably the chief determinant is the way a teacher feels toward the pupils.

In the classroom, one can frequently observe the teacher's real attitude in the pitch of her voice, her muscle tone, the tension of her manner, and similar signs. Outside the classroom, however, where "official" behavior is not required, attitudes are much more obvious.

Let us eavesdrop on some conversations in the men-teachers' locker rooms of several high schools in the company of friends who teach in these schools. The professional gossip of the teachers would probably have shocked the parents of the children. We select only two items:

"That b——— Mike is giving me ulcers. I'm gonna give him the works today. That little ——— has given me all I'm gonna take."

"You better watch your step, Joe. Big Shot [the supervisor] is fed up with the complaints their mommas have been sending in. Fatso's [the principal] been raising hell with him."

"Jack, you're new here. Let me give you a bit of advice. Never, never, never, turn your back to the class if you know what's good for you. When you write on the blackboard, stand sidewise—one eye on the board and one eye on the hoodlums."

These incidents are certainly not typical. We have heard other teachers, in the corridors of state teachers' colleges, express an essentially different spirit:

"That last meeting was certainly an eye-opener. It sure makes me feel bad to realize that we've been more worried about the kids' examination grades than about the kids themselves."

"That's the truth, Alice. There's nothing more important for kids than a sympathetic teacher who's watching over what's happening to them."

Anyone who has had personal and professional contact with teachers knows that most of them possess good will toward the children and genuine interest in their profession. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that many teachers reflect in practice attitudes which preclude any feeling of friendliness toward children. Carson W. Ryan, who visited schools throughout the United States in a study of the class atmosphere, concluded, "Simple friendliness in the schoolroom would seem to be one of those easily attainable and obviously desirable conditions for any human enterprise having to do with good mental health, but the visitor to schools finds it in shockingly few of the places he visits."

On the surface, the traditional has been replaced by the "modern" in many schools. The blackboards have turned green; seats have been unscrewed and turned to face one another. The teacher's desk is gathering dust in the storeroom. Report cards carry such items as "cooperativeness," "respect for the rights of others," "respect for other persons' property," and "initiative"; and the teachers spend many summer months in workshops for curriculum construction. Despite these superficial changes, however, the authoritarian attitudes remain. Essentially, they remain because

teachers are the products of our competitive culture and of homes which reflect this culture—and because ten or fifteen years of superficial modernization cannot do much to change attitudes that have been more than twenty years abuilding. Integrity of personality is more important than consolidation of school buildings.

Any sensitive person who observes the usual type of elementary or high-school class notes a certain uneasy tension in that classroom. There is something disturbing about the classroom atmosphere. It seems as if there is a kind of pulling and tugging, a contest of wills going on. The teacher seems to be feeling, "You're going to do what I want, and I am going to have my way," and the pupils seem to reflect the spirit, "I suppose we've got to do what you want, but we certainly won't like it. If you want us to do what you want, you're going to have to make us do it."

The average teacher does not often recognize what is really taking place. There has been too little in "teacher training" to prepare her for understanding herself, the role she assumes, or the resistance she meets with in the classroom on the part of the pupils. In this chapter we shall try to discover some of the factors which enter into creating the uneasy atmosphere of so many classrooms.

#### The Authoritarian Classroom

Pupils and teachers bring to and take from the classroom undesirable attitudes toward authority. The pupils expect to be told what to do, and how and when to do it. The authorities in the classroom, the teachers, expect to tell the pupils precisely that. Thus, pupils and teachers, interacting over the years in accord with their expectations of authoritarian relations, together create the traditional classroom atmosphere, which tends to threaten rather than to support genuine pupil growth.

There is no question, of course, that parents and teachers should be—and, in fact, are—authorities upon whom the developing child must lean. Very young children cannot easily be reasoned with. They lack the intellectual and language equipment to clearly

understand logical requests or explanations. Furthermore, many requests or demands on the part of parents or teachers cannot be justified on the basis of reason but are, nonetheless, necessary on the grounds of social and cultural expectations. Again, unusual or emergency situations may arise which demand adult interference and unquestioning obedience from the child. Finally, in many situations the normal child does not want and cannot accept responsibility without becoming panicky and feeling insecure. Up to a point, he wants to be told what to do and he wants to know what to expect. He is comfortable in having limits set for him by those upon whom he depends.

No reasonable person maintains that children should always be free to act impulsively. Children must learn to do even what they find difficult. It cannot be reiterated too often, it is the way authority is exercised which is the key to child growth.<sup>2</sup> It is the arbitrary use of authority on the part of parents and teachers that creates the traditional authoritarian classroom atmosphere. Authority is arbitrary (or illegitimate) to the degree that the person over whom it is exercised does not freely consent to or agree with what is demanded. The latter's feelings, interests, and attitudes are minimized or disregarded, and the feelings and wishes of the one wielding the authority set the pattern for the demanded behavior.

# The Evils of Traditional Controls

No society has ever permitted its children to make their own decisions in socially important matters. Every civilization has its peculiar traditions, beliefs, and mythologies, which must be maintained. Its particular "goods" and "evils" must be arbitrarily imposed upon children. Social institutions and values must be preserved.

Dr. Brock Chisholm, one of the world's leaders in the mental hygiene movement, and former Director General of the World Health Organization, has said,

We have been very slow to rediscover this truth and to recognize the unnecessary and artificially imposed inferiority,

#### 22 The Current Practice

guilt and fear, commonly known as sin, under which we have almost all labored and which produces so much of the social maladjustment and unhappiness in the world. For many generations we have bowed our necks to the yoke of the conviction of sin. We have swallowed all manner of poisonous certainties fed us by our parents, our Sunday and day school teachers, our politicians, our priests, our newspapers and others with a vested interest in controlling us. "Thou shalt become as gods, knowing good and evil," good and evil with which to keep children under control, with which to prevent free thinking, with which to impose local and familial and national loyalties and with which to blind children to their glorious intellectual heritage. Misguided by authoritarian dogma, bound by exclusive faith, stunted by inculcated loyalty, torn by frantic heresy, bedeviled by insistent schism, drugged by ecstatic experience, confused by conflicting certainty, bewildered by invented mystery, and loaded down by the weight of guilt and fear engendered by its own original promises, the unfortunate human race, deprived by these incubi of its only defenses and its only only reasons for striving, its reasoning power and its natural capacity to enjoy the satisfaction of its natural urges, struggles along under its ghastly selfimposed burden. The results, the inevitable results, are frustration, inferiority, neurosis and inability to enjoy living, to reason clearly or to make a world fit to live in.

Man's freedom to observe and to think freely is as essential to his survival as are the specific methods of survival of the other species to them. Birds must fly, fish must swim, herbivorous animals must eat grasses and cereals, and man must observe and think freely. That freedom, present in all children and known as innocence, has been destroyed or crippled by local certainties, by gods of local moralities, of local loyalty, of personal salvation, of prejudice and hate and intolerance—frequently masquerading as love—gods of everything that would destroy freedom to observe and to think and would keep each generation under the control of the old people, the elders, the shamans, and the priests.

It would seem that, of all the people in the world, only our own parents and our own public school teachers were right, most of the time, about everything. "We could refuse to accept their rightness only at the price of a load of guilt and fear, and peril to our immortal souls. This training has been practically universal in the human race." It is this overwhelming reliance on absolutes which leads to self-righteous rigidities and unyielding authoritarianism in relation to children.

# Parental Authority

Children must learn to adjust to the realities of the adult world. From early infancy, the developing child maintains a continuous, precarious struggle to locate himself both in his own expanding world and in the adult world.

Often the child looks to the parents for strength and security, but at other times it challenges the parent's will to discover weakness and to test the adult's strength. Parents sometimes lose control and display temper and anger, thereby creating fear, panic, and insecurity in the child.

The harassed parent seeks to curb the child's spontaneity and willfulness. Adult patterns are projected upon the child long before he can possibly understand their significance or necessity. Few parents, it seems, possess the insight and the patience to gear their demands to the capacity and inner development of the individual child. Most adults cajole, threaten, demand, frighten, or cudgel the child into the behavior they desire.

The child persists, for a while, in doing things his way. The parent retaliates. "Don't." "No." "Naughty." "How many times must I tell you that ———?" "If I have to speak to you once more, I'll ———." "Wait until your father comes home, ———" etc., etc., etc., throughout the years of childhood.

Very often the child, especially during his early years, simply does not understand the logic of the situation or the reasonableness of the request from the adult point of view. The child does not react to the content of the argument, or to the logic of the demand. He reacts to the psychic-motor tensions of the parent, as well as

to his own feelings which accompany the punishment. Emotion cannot be concealed. It reveals itself in the pitch of the voice, the tilt of the head and the position of the arms, the tension of the lips and facial muscles, the position of the eyebrows, the pauses between phrases, the choice of words, etc.

What occurs is that the child associates the parent's disturbance, as he experiences it, and his own anxiety, fear, hostility, and rejection with his independent act of willing. That is to say, his own way, his own will gets him into trouble. It is not what he wants to do, but the very fact that he wants to do that is wicked. Being independent is the evil thing which is punished. He is frightened. He experiences fear following his natural impulse to say or do or try things in his own spontaneous and creative way.

Acting independently, he discovers rather early, gets one into trouble. It's evil to follow your impulses. Do what's expected, listen to parents and teachers, and avoid painful consequences. Do not speak when you feel like saying your piece. Speak when you're spoken to. Don't question your parents; don't question the teacher. Parents know best. Teacher knows best. The radio announcer knows best. Emily Post knows best. . . . Hitler knows best.

# Avoiding Challenge

The net effect of this cascade of criticism over the years is to cover up our sense of independent selfhood and to deposit upon it sediments of inferiority. Dependence upon others, and conformity to outside pressures because of fear and anxiety, too often become the accustomed response to new experience.

Thus, each of us, in light of the peculiar constellation of immediate experiences with parents, directs his fear of authority, usually without realizing what occurs, into patterns of submission, withdrawal, aggression, or indignation. These patterns become our customary ways of meeting change and challenge. We have developed skilled defenses in avoiding the risks involved in tangling with threatening authority.

When we enter school, we sense in our teachers the authoritarian symbols of our parents. Our expectations are realized. We quickly learn to conform to the demands of the teacher. We learn the specific rewards for the assigned requirements and the specific punishments for their violation. The feeling communicated to us—that we need to be, and are being, controlled—itself produces anxieties, threats, and countermeasures. One of the principal defenses is retreat or submission. Avoid risks or take the consequences. This we have learned since infancy.

We fear arbitrary authority in all its forms. We basically distrust teachers who do not consider how we feel, who do not consult with us. As pupils, we would not know, in most situations, how to act if the usual teacher-pupil expectations were suddenly redefined.

Let us turn for an example to a recent discussion between the writer and a group of students. The pupils were not fourth-graders or junior high school freshmen. They were practicing teachers between the ages of thirty and forty years, matriculated for graduate degrees. The discussion occurred at the first meeting of a seminar.

INSTRUCTOR: What criteria do we want to use for evaluating our work?

JIM: You mean we're to have more than one examination?

about judging the performance of the several members of the group. The University does require certification for the successful completion of this work. We needn't necessarily employ the traditional examination, especially since all of you are graduate students.

NED: How about a term paper?

INSTRUCTOR: I'm not sure I understand what you mean. What kind of paper?

NED: Oh, you can decide that. STELLA: How long must it be?

LAWRENCE: Will the paper be the sole basis for the grade?

INSTRUCTOR: I really don't know what kind of papers you want to do. We haven't discussed that. I don't suppose anyone can determine the scope or size of the project before its character is decided upon. What do we have in mind when we say "paper" or "project"?

ELIZABETH: Why don't you assign us the themes you want us to do?

INSTRUCTOR: I, myself, really have no particular interest in your doing any themes.

JIM: I thought you wanted us to write papers so you could give us a grade.

INSTRUCTOR: I think the problem for all of us is to determine how best to evaluate performance.

STELLA: Why can't you assign a couple of books instead?

The members of the group do not seem able, either in the teacher's role or as students, to understand that they are being asked to play a part in determining the objectives for the course and the criteria for evaluating them. That is not to be wondered at since, for most of them, this is probably a new experience, and they are unprepared to meet challenge in the classroom other than through withdrawal and surrender to authority.

# The Teacher's Use of Authority

Most of the present generation of adult school teachers and candidates for teaching are products of the kind of home atmosphere described earlier in this chapter. Most of us retain a good deal of the resentment and hostility we experienced as children because we did not dare to do things our way.

A great deal of our spontaneous freedom of self-expression was curbed. We learned to defer to our elders, not to question

authority. Deep within almost every adult are gnawing feelings of inadequacy and incompleteness. Without being aware of it, most of us resent our inability to express more of our independent self-hood. We have learned how costly it is to tangle with authority. We feel guilty and anxious about being different.

Now, if we could find an area in which difference might be expressed without danger to self, we could satisfy our need for self-expression and be reassured that we do count. The classroom is an ideal setting. Here the teacher possesses status and prestige. She has the power over the pupils. There is little to fear by way of retaliation. By imposing her will upon the pupils, she can gain some reassurance that she counts. We tend to use those over whom we exercise control to reassure ourselves that we are important. Our own fear of losing control drives us to become authoritative. We are driven to find a place under the sun. Here is what some of our teachers say about their fears.

JERRY: I think when we get to the classroom we're afraid of the children. We're afraid of them because we have certain things at stake. Maybe what we're afraid of is that we really don't know our jobs.

NED: Yes, we're afraid of social disapproval and we don't want to jeopardize our standing as successful teachers. The kids have got to pass the examinations. That's why I find myself giving my children extra homework. Now I can see the reason I do that is to make sure I'll be considered a successful teacher. The kids are doing homework to help me be considered a success. That's awful!

INSTRUCTOR: Are you saying that you use the kids for your needs?

NED: Yes, I am. Oh, I get it. We ought to think of what the children really are getting out of the class instruction, not what we are getting. As a matter of fact, I'm not as bad as I thought. I was assigning the kids a project this morning. I

wanted them to do it in their own way. They did a lot of hammering and made an awful lot of noise, and, after a few minutes, I said: "For goodness sake, quiet down."

INSTRUCTOR: Why did you say that, Ned?

NED: Well, I told them I had a headache.

INSTRUCTOR: Did you?

NED: Yes, and, in addition, I was troubled by the fact that they were disturbing the other classes.

INSTRUCTOR: What do you mean, "in addition"?

NED: Well, besides my headache I was disturbed by the fact that they were making too much noise. I kept looking at the hall to see whether or not we were disturbing other people.

INSTRUCTOR: How would looking at the hall indicate that?

NED: I wanted to see if the supervisor or principal was coming.

[Laughter from class]

INSTRUCTOR: Ned?

NED: I guess I was afraid of the principal and my job. It wasn't my headache at all.

INSTRUCTOR: At least, it was a different kind of headache. Ned, you're really trying to operate in a framework which your school doesn't support.

NED: That's right, and I'm mixed up. I want to do things my way, and the school wants to do them another way. I make the kids take home textbooks because the principal complains if they don't. He says the parents complain to him if the kids haven't textbooks at home.

LILA: Perhaps the children should be given homework, not because we want to protect ourselves, but because they may require it for their own needs.

INSTRUCTOR: Would that hold true for history or reading or any other subject?

JIM: Well, I could teach what the school requires me to teach and still try to find out what the kids think about the history.

JOHN: I suppose the better way to help the kids learn is to ask them to tell me what kind of stories they like and maybe have different stories for different children. NED: I begin to see what is meant. Really, what I am doing is blaming the parents, the principal, and the supervisor for my own lack of skill. The situation may be difficult, but I'm sure now that a good part of it is my own uncertainty and lack of skill.

Ned, Jim, and John are beginning to realize that their individual attitudes determine the classroom atmosphere. The content of their classes was predetermined, but within that given framework they could try to locate pupil interest or, at least, afford pupils the opportunity to participate without threat or compulsion. It cannot be repeated too often that the essential problem is the way in which the teacher uses the given situation to create a comfortable atmosphere which is likely to encourage the active participation

The seminar participants are certainly becoming sensitized to the kind of atmosphere an authoritarian teacher creates and to the role their own needs play in the process. They begin to see how they contribute to the problem of "discipline." They gradually realize the need for creating a different teacher-pupil atmosphere, a climate which will aid the children rather than one which will release their own tensions.

MABEL: Can we avoid bringing ourselves and our problems into the classroom?

INSTRUCTOR: What do you mean?

of the pupil.

MABEL: Just to give one little example: I know whenever I don't have enough sleep I'm very cranky and cross with the children. And I certainly know that the problem is myself and not the kids. It seems to me we ought to bear in mind that children bring themselves into the classroom. And as between children and ourselves, we naturally think that our attitudes are the right ones. We want the children to conform to us

and our feelings. Now if we know that so many of these tensions come from our personal problems, we should be very careful in how we relate to the children.

STELLA: Well, I understand myself. I understand the children. The problem is in the classroom. There is nothing that is being done, and there's nothing that will be done.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, then, Stella, you have no problem since nothing can be done and that's all there's to it.

STELLA: There's no problem with me. There's nothing I can do. But I do feel that I'm not getting job satisfaction. I'd like to feel happier in my job.

INSTRUCTOR: There does seem to be some kind of problem, doesn't there?

stella: Yes, there is. I just don't know. I prepare my work, I try to make my classes interesting and get no satisfaction. I have to keep on telling the children to behave themselves, and it just wears me down. I'm completely tired out each day. [A long silence]

INSTRUCTOR: All of us recognize the problems Stella is telling us about and we understand some of the difficulties. Perhaps we can make the problems a bit more specific.

It is too much to expect parents to surrender easily their need to overcontrol the development of their children. Parents are almost inevitably committed to pass on to their children their own basic loyalties, "goods," and "bads." They want their ways maintained and they insist—arbitrarily, much of the time—on the rightness of these ways. The result of this insistence is to load the children with guilt, fear, resentment, and insecurity. They learn to bow to rather than to question authority. Authority becomes a threat rather than a challenge.

The pupils bring their attitudes toward authority and accustomed ways of reacting to it into the classroom. If here they meet another adult who insists upon her rightness and arbitrarily seeks

to control the pupils, insecurity will, as in the home, often lead to external conformity, and fear will lead to submission. The class-room atmosphere will be tense and charged, not relaxed, easy, and warm.

Classroom teachers are people who matter a great deal. They can help enormously in creating an atmosphere in which the pupil feels the concern of the teacher in his problems with the work at hand, one in which the pupil is encouraged to question, to criticize, to contribute, to create, to learn. The classroom teacher can help in establishing this atmosphere if she becomes aware of her own need to dominate and to control the pupils. As she works through to the full awareness of her relationship to the pupils and the reasons for it, a change in classroom atmosphere is likely to follow.

The foregoing, oversimplified analysis is sufficient for the present purpose if it communicates to the reader (1) the role that the fear of authority plays in a learning situation and (2) the use which those in authority make of their power to gain reassurance for felt inadequacy or insecurity. The analysis does not imply that the average child, parent, or adult requires professional therapy. Most children, pupils, and adults have a sufficient margin of genuine freedom and affection to help them achieve the degree of balance required for the "normal" give and take of family, school, and community association. Indeed, from a mental-hygiene point of view, the function of responsible adults-parents and teachersis to provide sufficient guilt and anxiety to stimulate the acceptance of personal and social obligations. Without some sense of guilt, shame, humiliation, and self-criticism, it is difficult to imagine how anyone would be motivated to change. With too much guilt and anxiety, it is difficult to imagine how anyone would gain the courage and strength to want to change. The late Harry Stack Sullivan, one of our outstanding psychiatrists, declared that the very worst method of educating children is to create anxiety in them. The second worst method, Sullivan added, is not to generate any anxiety in children.

Children, especially when they are very young, do spontaneously, and in a positive spirit, emulate the behavior of their parents.

Because they love their parents and want to be like them, they incorporate into their own activities and feelings the ways of their parents. Usually the child independently wants to behave in the manner of those upon whom he depends. What they want and what the child wants are identical.

Growth, however, involves primarily the development of individual differences. A problem arises because parents and teachers seek to structure and direct the child's differences in accordance with adult views. The child, often, neither wanting to accept nor being capable of understanding what is required of him, has to be criticized or deprived in some way if the required change in behavior is to occur. In these instances, tension arises in the child because one part of him wants the love of those upon whom he depends but another side of him wants to behave in accordance with his individual needs and unique personality. The tension and its accompanying struggle to find a new balance is what we shall term, in this book, the "will-guilt" conflict.

The foregoing analysis implies that the balance of give and take between adults and the children for whose development they are responsible is weighted in favor of a "mass production" of personality. From the point of view of sensitive parents and alert teachers, the quality of contemporary personal and social relations is far from satisfying. The moral atmosphere in public, professional, and private life is alarming. The reasons for this are complex. The struggle for economic success, the political uncertainties, the questioning of traditional authority, the fear of external enemies, and the contention between disparate groups in our country certainly play their part in generating moral confusion, suspicion, and distrust.

In our present context, we are concerned with the genesis of the psychological traits which characterize the authoritarian personality. The authoritarian adult personality tends to be a supreme conformist, herd-minded, rigid, a moral purist, and an unthinking reactionary. At least this is what a team of social psychologists discovered as a result of almost five years of studying factory workers, officer candidates for the military service, veterans, members of service clubs, office workers, members of parent-teacher associations, church groups, and college students. The investigators concluded that, although various social factors certainly play a part in the development of authoritarian personalities, the key is found in the relationship between parents and children. A child brought up in an authoritarian home is likely to become an authoritarian adult. "Learning to disagree with one's parents," Samuel Flowerman, the editor of the volumes reporting the studies, writes, "may be the capstone of a democratic personality."

We are concerned here with the role we teachers can play in improving the quality of personal life by modifying the traditional and authoritarian spirit of instruction. There is no easy or simple resolution of the dilemma facing both parents and teachers. Parents who are deeply involved with their children insist upon instilling their social and community values in the child. In this process the child learns to deny too many individual differences and to avoid challenge too often. Anxiety and frustration accumulate. Fear of arbitrary authority and timid dependence on those in control are established. This is pedagogically desirable up to a point. We all need and want controls. Community life requires it.

Education, however, implies a departure from some given community values. We believe that the *individual* is sovereign, *up* to a point. Teachers are authorized representatives of community values and professional educators devoted to developing the individual differences of the children. Where are the points to be determined, how are the balances to be achieved?

The answer, in general, is to be found in the way in which teachers (or parents) help the child to balance social and individual needs. The approach depends upon the teacher's understanding of the role of authority and the expectations and defenses it creates in the life of both teacher and pupil.

The teacher is, in large measure, responsible for the atmosphere of the classroom. It is the way in which the teacher uses her responsibilities, her authority, and her spirit that encourages or inhibits

the learner's genuine participation in the teaching \leftarring process.5

# Problems for Discussion

Questions and projects, similar to those that appear below, are presented at the end of most of the chapters in this volume. A word of explanation may be helpful, since these materials are intended primarily to stimulate analysis and discussion. Indeed, in the course of dealing with them, the reader may produce arguments that seriously question the author's point of view and the validity of the chapter itself.

Some of the questions can be answered in a variety of ways; others probably cannot be answered "correctly" at all, since no-body yet knows the "correct" answer. Why, then, raise such questions? As teachers we must often deal with problems regardless of our ability to solve them definitively. But even more important, the very act of searching for answers gives rise to fresh perspectives and to the uncovering of other questions—questions that might otherwise not be recognized.

- 1. Your local or state school administration, let us assume, requires grade report cards. Despite the objections of the majority of parents and children, the teacher continues to give grades and require the signature of the parent on the report card. Does such teacher exercise arbitrary authority?
- 2. The school board of a Canadian city recently issued a directive to the teachers requiring that each child's progress be evaluated after a conference with the parents and child, taking into account the pupil's social and emotional factors observed in the classroom. The parents approved but the teachers strongly opposed the school board's directive. They wanted to continue with the traditional report card. If you were a member of the board of education, what stand would you take?
  - 3. All of us probably agree that pupils cannot always do what

they please. They have to be restricted and observe certain rules. This leads to resentment. What, if anything, can the teacher do to change this kind of classroom atmosphere? Johnny, for example, an insecure pupil in the seventh grade, persists in interrupting, and disturbs the class by continual whispering. How does the teacher deal with this situation?

- 4. It is a common experience in most secondary-school class-rooms that only a small percentage of pupils voluntarily participate in discussion. The nonparticipants, however, are quite active and vociferous in the company of their friends. How do you account for their patterned quietness and silence in the classroom? Are they afraid of the teacher, or of themselves, or of one another? Why?
- 5. What different explanations of a teacher's lack of poise in the classroom can you offer?
- 6. Suppose you entered a classroom and observed thirty-five eight- to nine-year-old pupils sitting in stiff silence listening to a teacher reading from a history text describing the route of Magellan. What are some of the thoughts and feelings of the pupils as they "listen" to the teacher reading from the text? Does such atmosphere reflect an efficient learning situation?
- 7. Do you agree that children should respect their teachers? What do you mean by "respect"? How can it be achieved?
- 8. Is authority desirable for psychological health? Do pupils of different ages require different degrees of authority?
- 9. Is the teacher who successfully "controls" a class in control of herself?
- 10. How can a teacher become increasingly successful in creating a classroom atmosphere favorable to learning?

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rector of the well-known Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, has presented in four or five pages one of the clearest analyses of the problem of balancing the interests of the parent and the needs of the child.

- Schisholm, Brock. "Enduring Peace and Social Progress," Psychiatry, Vol. IX, Feb. 1946. The former Director of the Canadian Mental Hygiene Association, and for five years Director General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Chisholm delivered this address, which has had wide circulation. Every teacher, we think, will find a study of this paper highly rewarding.
- \*Studies in Prejudice, ed. by Max Horkheimer and Samuel H. Flowerman. New York: Harper and Bros., 1950. This five-volume series is one of the most extensive studies of the types of character which respond to authoritarian and antidemocratic appeals. The first volume in the series is The Authoritarian Personality. A team of social psychologists in California worked for almost five years studying and testing more than two thousand persons in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Oregon, and Washington, D. C. The authoritarian personality, they found, tends to be conforming, rigid, herd-minded, hypocritically conservative, and puritanical.
- York: Commonwealth Fund, 1937. Dr. Plant used his well-known Juvenile Clinic in Newark, N. J., to discover wherein such institutions as the school and home, among others, failed to meet the needs of individual children. Through working with thousands of young people, he tried to interpret to the source of referral of the children what part they may have played in failing to meet the needs of the youngsters. The chapters on the family and the school, and the sections on authority, pp. 83-88, 275-288, are especially recommended to teachers.

#### A SELF-INSIGHT SCALE

The reader is urged to take this test before starting to study this volume and, again, after completing the study of it. A comparison of the two scores should be interesting, since the differences in scores for each statement between the "before" test and the "after" test will indicate changes in appraisal of self.

This test has been carefully constructed by Prof. Llewellyn Gross, a member of the Sociology Department, University of Buffalo, and we wish to express our appreciation for his kind permission to use it.\*

Please indicate your degree of agreement with each of the following statements by placing a check in the space after each statement which most nearly represents your opinion of yourself.

1. Undoubtedly, there are some people who would find my personal habits annoying. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
2. At times I have made unkind and depreciating remarks about individuals who were not present to defend themselves. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
3. I am not afraid to explore fully the hidden sources of my personality. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
4. I have criticized other people for saying things that I might very well have said myself. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
*The reader interested in the formulation, selection, and trial application of statements for the Self-Insight Scale and in the validity of the Scale will want to read Prof. Gross's article "The Construction and Partial Standardization of a Scale for Measuring Self-Insight," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 28, 1948, pp. 219-236.

5. I am sure of only those things of which I have proof.  strongly agree
6. I have accused other people of possessing traits which were really a part of my own personality. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
7. At times I have been so displeased with other people's actions as to wish revenge. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
8. I have no need to deceive myself on anything concerning my personality. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
9. Much of my reasoning consists in finding arguments for going on thinking as I already do. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
10. I have on occasion rejected new ideas because they were not emotionally satisfying. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
11. I have some personal obligations which I would rather leave for other people to perform. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
12. I have always appreciated a frank criticism of my faults. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
13. I have never evaded facing the truth. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
14. Occasionally I have sexual thoughts which I would not like to reveal to other people. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
15. I can as easily laugh at myself as at other people.  strongly agree  uncertain disagree  strongly disagree

16. I have never tried to make anyone believe that I am
a different person from what I know myself to be. strongly
agree 🗌 agree 🔲 uncertain 🔲 disagree 🔲 strongly
disagree
17. I have criticized other people for doing things that
I might very well have done myself. strongly agree agree agree
□ uncertain □ disagree □ strongly disagree □
18. I have never lacked courage when in need of it.
strongly agree agree uncertain disagree
strongly disagree
19. I have at some time acted upon the basis of self-
interest knowing that my gains would be another's losses.
strongly agree  agree  uncertain  disagree
strongly disagree
20. I am always careful to describe correctly what I have
read or seen. strongly agree agree uncertain
disagree strongly disagree
21. There is no one who might think of me as a selfish
person. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree
strongly disagree
22. There are times when I am not so clean and well
groomed as I could be. strongly agree agree uncer-
tain disagree strongly disagree
23. I have always been courteous in my dealings with
other people. strongly agree agree uncertain dis-
agree strongly disagree
24. I have no feeling of hostility toward anyone. strongly
agree agree uncertain disagree strongly
disagree
25. I am grateful for everything given to me. strongly
agree  agree  uncertain  disagree  strongly
26. There are times when I have been a source of an-
noyance to other people. strongly agree agree uncer-
tain disagree strongly disagree

27. As a friend, some people would find me disappointing. strongly agree \[ \] agree \[ \] uncertain \[ \] disagree \[ \] strongly disagree \[ \]
28. I have always accepted misfortune without complaining. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
29. If it were not for the fear of disapproval, I would probably violate certain social conventions. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
30. On more than one occasion, I have committed a spiteful act. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
31. I have never been a slacker in my work. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
32. I have never insulted anyone. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
33. There are times when my thoughts are confused and disordered. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
34. My personal wishes are sometimes contrary to the best interests of society. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
35. I sometimes criticize another's actions because of the feeling of self-righteousness or superiority it gives me. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
36. I sometimes do a good turn because of the praise or advantage it brings me. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
37. I have sometimes corrected others only because they irritated me. strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree

### Chapter Two

# Teaching by Definition

Signs and Symbols

Definitions and Understanding

The Translation of Verbal Knowledge

Problems for Discussion

HE TEACHER WHO IS INCLINED to be authoritarian is also likely to teach largely by definition—because definition is another form of authority.

The belief is widespread that knowledge and understanding of a subject mean the same thing. The terms "knowledge" and "understanding" can, of course, be interpreted so as to have equivalent meaning. Generally, however, the schools (elementary, secondary, and the colleges of liberal arts and sciences) focus on the transmission of factual information and pay relatively scant attention to the translation of the data by the student. The schools, by and large, are interested in the data, not in pupil appraisal and assimilation, which constitute understanding. In this chapter, we shall explore the important distinctions between definitions, or knowledge, and understanding.

The term "definition" is derived from the Latin, de and finis, "to end off." Telling students, defining concepts, transmitting knowledge that pupils are unprepared to appreciate "ends off" exploration and self-discovery. The pupils are blocked and trapped by the teacher's (or the text's) definitions and facts. There is nothing left for them to chew on, to explore, to differ with, to challenge. "Here it is. I'm telling you. Tell me back and we're through."

Talking is not teaching, and listening is not learning. The teaching⇔learning experience is an organic whole characterized by communication. Communication involves language, but it is more than language. Heifetz, obviously, cannot play a concerto without a violin, but the instrument itself does not guarantee his performance. The instrument does not play itself; the violinist performs through the instrument. It is the teacher, as a person, who uses, and the student, as a person, who perceives, the language; together they determine the quality and depth of communication.

This appears so obvious in fact yet is violated so often in practice that one is led to wonder why. The answer is found in the less obvious distinction between knowledge and understanding. Before turning to an analysis of the distinction, let us examine, rather briefly, the nature of language.

## Signs and Symbols

All abstract thinking involves the use of words arranged in a particular structure. The separate meanings of words do not constitute language. It is the *relation* of the separate words to one another that produces a unitary whole, called a proposition. Words alone are not enough for abstract communication. Syntax or grammar is essential. Infants can utter single words, each of which may mean some one thing, but they cannot communicate more than simple ideas until they use grammar to form sentences. This is why, when we listen to a very young child talking—i.e., using isolated words—we ask, "What is he trying to say?"

When a word and the object or event it signifies are associated so that the person hearing the term reacts directly to the specific object or event for which it stands, the meaning of the term is psychological. The baby points to the dog, and the mother says, "Dog." After a few trials, the verbal sign "dog" stands for the living pet. The pet, in turn, leads the child to utter the sign "dog."

On the other hand, when a term refers to the *implications* or meanings of an object or event, the term is a *symbol* for a series of *ideas* about the object or event. The meaning of the term is *logical*.

If one asked the question, "What is a dog?" and the one-yearold replied, "A domesticated carnivorous mammal, canis familiaris," we would be no less surprised than if in reply to the question a mammalogist said, "Bow-wow!" In this situation the expected psychological and logical levels are reversed.

Almost all our opinions about religion, politics, education, crime, communists, landlords, mothers-in-law, morals, and so on represent a mixture of both the logical and psychological meanings of the signs and symbols we employ. Our feelings and sense perceptions are intermingled with the ideas. For most people, the psychological meaning of terms predominates in their thinking. It is easy to understand why.

We first learn the words or acquire a working vocabulary during our early childhood, a time when specific verbal signs are directly associated with specific events or objects or feelings. Gradually, and only over a long period of time, after one has had considerable experience in examining verbal signs and symbols—i.e., has become self-critical of the meaning of terms—does one learn to deal with ideas, the logical implications of language one uses. The ability to generalize matures.

It is indeed difficult to keep our sense perceptions and feelings associated with word signs separate from the implications of ideas as symbols. The inevitable interplay of both aspects of meaning, the logical and psychological, is one of the chief sources of confusion in communication through speech, writing, or reading. Fortunately, there is one area in which the separation is almost (if not perfectly) achieved, the field of mathematics. Bertrand Russell and A. N. Whitehead, among others, have shown that mathematics can be reduced to logic, that the two are ultimately identical. Russell once remarked that a mathematician does not have to know what he is talking about. Mathematics has no empirical or denotative content. It is psychologically empty and never refers to any specific object, feeling, or thing. It never deals with truth or falsity or degrees of probability. Mathematics deals only with implications and logical relations of formal propositions. It never answers the question "Is it true or false?" It only answers the question "Does A follow logically from B?" Thus in  $(x + y)^2 = x^2 + 2xy + y^2$ , x and y have no assigned specific meaning. Either side of the equation implies the other.

It is fortunate that there is such an area of complete separation between the psychological and logical meaning of symbols, because the growth of science rests on precisely this separation.

### Definitions and Understanding

Reliable knowledge, then, consists of ascertained facts which define the ways in which events, from a specific point of view, are systematically related to one another. It is the specific frame of reference which permits and guides the research worker to select the data which may prove to be pertinent. Without a point of view, or a particular problem, one would not be able to narrow or limit the search for the answer. Every careful research scientist would agree that the most significant step in gathering knowledge is to ask the proper questions, to state the problems for which answers are sought, to understand what one is about.

What is a fact for one person may be an empty verbal concept for another if the latter has no interest or problem to which the alleged fact is related. In the classroom, many "facts" are presented which are foreign to any awakened interest or vital problem of the pupil. To illustrate this, let us examine a "fact" which, to the reader, initially presents no real interest. Here it is: In the Kwakiutl Indian language begwanem means "boy" and bebegwanem means "boys."

Notice what has probably occurred. The reader did not pause to wonder whether he pronounced "Kwakiutl" correctly, let alone stop to find out who they are or where they live. Let us assume that he has memorized the word for boys, bebegwanem. What does he now understand? What kind of fact is this information to him? What is the importance of this bit of knowledge, its import? Unless the reader has a significant frame of reference to which the "fact" refers—an interest or a problem which this "fact" satisfies or illuminates—there is no understanding. We might just as well have said, "Oogle is boogle"; he could retain this information for a while so that if, subsequently, he were asked, "What is oogle?" he could reply, "Boogle."

Now suppose we ask the reader what the relationships are between the English or Romance languages and the languages of primitive people—say, the Kwakiutl Indian language. We discuss the matter. He seems to think, let us say, that primitive language is a kind of guttural jargon with little definite structure, limited vocabulary, and so on. This leads us to inquire into the structure of Indian languages. He discovers to his surprise that there are several hundred Indian languages, as unrelated to one another as Chinese is to Latin. He probably raises some further questions. He learns, in response to his questions, that the Eskimo have interest-

ing poetry, that different Indian languages employ various rules for expressing tense and forming plurals, that no one rule is in any way better or worse than the rules of other languages. In English, for example, the plural is commonly formed by adding a suffix "-s": boy, boys. In Kwakiutl, the prefix is doubled to form a plural: begwanem, bebegwanem. Why is this, he wonders? We continue the discussion. The end result, after an hour or fifty hours of language analysis, may be new insight into the basic common categories of men's thoughts and feelings throughout the world, or perhaps into how different languages develop different patterns of observation. These insights can become part of his facts which help to shape his social, racial, and political orientation as an adult. Bebegwanem can have import for him if, in light of his interest, he makes it his fact. The knowledge is understood.

One of the chief functions of a teacher is to make knowledge available to pupils. The average teacher in the elementary and secondary levels of education frequently fails to appreciate two major stumbling blocks: (1) the degree to which the pupil's psychological meanings of the ideas employed by the teacher differ from her meanings, and (2) the failure of the pupil to understand the logical implications of the ideas. In brief, having little or no interest in the teacher's knowledge, the pupil fails to understand what is being taught, and the teacher consequently fails to communicate.

The pupil is listening—primarily in the framework of passing the impending examination—to various series of cold, sterile concepts which he memorizes for purposes of answering the instructor's questions. The data are related to answering examination questions, not to solving the pupil's problems (other than the problem of passing the examination). In brief, the data are, essentially, exercises in memory and recall.

Knowledge can be transmitted by word of mouth or by text and reproduced by memory. In these circumstances it remains an intellectual jigsaw puzzle with the pieces lying about in unpatterned heaps. Knowledge has to be translated by the student. The student must be helped to distinguish between what the data mean to him

and what the data mean. The significance of the distinction between the psychological and logical aspects of verbal symbols should now be apparent.

At this stage some readers will point out that many pupils in the schools do "learn" subject matter through the orthodox method of classroom lecturing, textbook reading, and recitations. This unquestionably holds true for a small minority (although we might want to examine rather closely the nature of their "learning"). Any teacher with many years of experience will have observed (without benefit of extended statistical investigations) that the average product of our elementary and secondary school system is filled with unexamined verbal clichés and that he cannot speak or think clearly or logically. He possesses a smattering of jumbled bits of inconsequential information whose significance escapes him.

An inquiry conducted by the American Council on Education documents this generalization only too well. A committee was appointed to work out a two-year basic integrated course in social studies, with the cooperation of a dozen colleges in the United States. The members of the committee recognized that, before planning a social studies program, it would be sensible to find out what the students' needs were and what students knew and did not know. They therefore developed two instruments, "An Inventory of Social Understanding" and "An Inventory of Beliefs about Postwar Reconstruction," to be used by the twelve participating colleges.

Each inventory consisted of 150 questions covering several important areas—economic, political, national, moral, and religious—from which American culture might be viewed. The committee was trying to find out: (1) What does the *student* think is important in the social world? (2) What confusions and inconsistencies of attitude characterize the student? (3) What is the relation between one's attitude and the ability to think critically?

The committee agreed that the effectiveness of any program in social studies could be measured by asking: (1) "Is the student acquiring knowledge of facts and principles which may enable him to meet intelligently the chief problems in the modern world?" For example, could he answer the question "Why is labor organized?"

or "What are the reasons for the breakdown of the home?" (2) "Is the student acquiring general study skills in the course of his social science education?" For example, can he read critically? Can he understand maps and tables? (3) "Is the student acquiring habits of critical thinking from his work in the social science field?" For example, does he know what "proof" or "evidence" means? Can he detect propaganda? (4) "Is he acquiring an active interest in the problems presented by the social science field and an appreciation of democratic values?"

If the students of the twelve participating colleges represent a fair sample of the students of the colleges of arts and sciences of the United States, the picture is indeed dismal. We have here the first extended empirical demonstration of what some educators had supposed. An alarming percentage of college students are ignorant, confused, prejudiced, conservative, and cannot think straight. They do not understand what to do with, or how to deal with, the facts they are asked to read and memorize.<sup>1</sup>

In a similar vein, Norman Birnbaum, a teacher in the General Education Program at Harvard, stated in an address to the Harvard Committee on General Education

They [the students] come to us as victims: victims of the abominable secondary-school education they have almost invariably received. . . . Our students upon arrival at college are most assuredly unable to think, do hardly better as far as reading and writing are concerned, and are utter strangers to the traditions into which we plunge them. . . . What is most striking is the varied way in which the secondary-school background conditions the incapacity of the student to deal with the course materials.<sup>2</sup>

The thesis of this chapter—that teaching is not talking and that listening (or memorizing) is not learning—is supported by the qualitative difference the observer notes in pupil performance in some areas—for example, music, drama, or sports. These experiences involve living expressions of genuine interest. The student accepts the practice and discipline involved because the experience is meaningful to him, both psychologically and logically.

It does not follow that the school curriculum should be limited to Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, mixed-choir singing, automobile-driving classes, and school dances. There are bodies of knowledge, definite subject matters and skills, which can be acquired and understood. All students need to understand certain data and possess certain skills if they are to participate intelligently and sensitively in social life (see Chap. 5).

The point is to help the student crystallize his social needs so that he becomes aware of them and is willing to accept the challenge involved in satisfying and expressing them. The problem is to devise methods or situations which will evoke student interest, participation, and self-responsibility. The problem is not so much "What is to be taught?" as it is "How is the student to learn?"

# The Translation of Verbal Knowledge

The problem is difficult because of the heterogeneity of student background and make up. There are differences in interest, imagination, ability to engage in abstract thinking, emotional orientation, and habits of study, to mention only a few major ones. A good deal of the difficulty can be met by limiting the size of the group so that the teacher has the opportunity to acquaint herself with the major individual differences of the students.

The teacher will, of course, meet countless frustrations and difficulties in stimulating pupil interest or in discovering and clarifying pupil needs. The point we are considering now, however, is not the lack of pupil response but the skill of teacher approach. At least the teacher should not be chargeable with blocking or preventing the expression of pupil interest. This is what generally happens when teachers "present" material.

Bodies of knowledge must be acquired, but there is no fixed rule which declares how this is to be done. Certainly "talking" the course, so that individual differences of pupils are overlooked, almost guarantees that knowledge will not be understood. Recitation work almost guarantees that the pupil will repeat what the teacher

wants. "Recite," according to Webster's New International Dictionary, means "to repeat something prepared or committed to memory." Students are most often concerned with vital personal problems, whereas teachers are generally concerned with presenting readymade definitions. Students bring to the classroom themselves -their likes, hopes, fears, joys, hostilities, jealousies, inferiorities, anxieties, and confusions. Teachers bring their texts and official syllabi-and themselves. They expose the texts and they ask the questions, but the pupils do not expose themselves. Students superficially record the definitions in their notebooks (knowledge), and teachers formally evaluate performances of the children in the roll books.

For effective teaching, the point of departure must be where the pupil is, not where the teacher thinks he should be. The time for definitions is at the end of exploration, not at the beginning of inquiry. Naturally, there is no sharp dividing line between what one knows well and what one senses inchoately. Students approach a subject matter with some related background, some knowledge, and some useful, tentative definitions. Otherwise, it would be utterly impossible for any communication to take place. The assimilation of new knowledge depends upon background and interest. The new knowledge cannot merely be added by statement or definition. It can first be explored in light of what one already knows, and then gradually integrated into new, modified concepts and definitions.

A brief excerpt illustrates the above point. Several members of the group had been discussing for several meetings the criteria that mark a successful teacher. Someone (Lawrence) had suggested in one of the earlier meetings that the performance of the teacher proved her skill. Most of the students had agreed, but few of them seemed to understand what they gave intellectual assent to. They did not understand what Lawrence meant.

INSTRUCTOR: Does a successful teaching job depend upon the approval or disapproval of the pupils or upon the teacher's awareness of what is happening?

JOHN: There's the key to the whole business! You have to be a certain way before you can relate to the children. In other words, you've got to understand yourself and how to use yourself before you can help your pupils. Well, my goodness, that's what we've been talking about for the past several weeks!

HOPE: I'm beginning to see something for the first time. The important thing is for the teacher to be aware of what's happening. It's the process, not the product. Lawrence said that earlier but I didn't understand it then, although I thought I did.

• • •

In Chapter 4 we shall discuss the difficult concept of expressing one's personality and one's differences from other people. The intellectual formulation is simple. One can define the problem by stating, "The spontaneous expression of one's difference releases tension and increases one's feeling of self-respect. However, it is not easy, because we fear disapproval." Different readers will understand this formulation differently. The depth of understanding depends upon how one translates the idea in accord with one's experience with expressing difference.

Our group had been exploring the meaning of "the expression of difference." In this case, too, the group members had safely engaged in a good deal of superficial talk. During a subsequent meeting, Jerry, in presenting a point, had become somewhat uncomfortable, and the instructor had persisted in developing the implications.

CARL: I wonder whether, perhaps, you didn't push Jerry a little bit.

INSTRUCTOR: Do you mean, Carl, that I did?

CARL: Yes, I'm sure of it. I can feel the way Jerry feels.

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder, then, why you said "perhaps."

CARL: Well, I was a little timid.

INSTRUCTOR: You feared taking responsibility for your own position and feeling?

CARL: That's exactly right.

INSTRUCTOR: I see now that I did push Jerry and I feel badly about it. I didn't quite realize it. I'm glad, Carl, you called my attention to that.

CARL: I'm more comfortable now than I was a moment ago when I did.

NANCY: You know, it just occurs to me-I now begin to understand what you mean by being different.

INSTRUCTOR: Do you want to explain, Nancy?

NANCY: Yes. For example, I didn't want to come here tonight. The first four meetings were dreadful. But I did come, and I feel free to say I didn't want to come. I saw that nothing happened to Carl when he criticized you and said something he felt he shouldn't say. It's wonderful to express how you really feel and not have it held against you. I wouldn't have missed tonight for anything.

INSTRUCTOR: This little side exploration is important. I show my difference since I am unafraid of saying what I want to say. I also expect you, and each of us should expect each other, to say what you want to say. It is only by all of us being relatively free to show our differences that we can help each other.

Carl, Nancy, and Jerry, through this experience, in which they have become involved emotionally as well as intellectually, are translating the idea of "difference" into an understanding of being different. They no longer merely discuss or "know" that individuals are different. They realize what it means to be different.

It does not follow from the foregoing analysis, differentiating between knowledge and understanding, that the distinction is a sharp one. It is the emphasis on word knowledge, on abstract concepts not closely related to the vital interests of the pupil, that is, we maintain, misplaced. Indeed, knowledge is indispensable for growth. The content of knowledge, the facts, and the objective definitions must, however, be pegged to the problems which con-

cern the pupil. One's education consists, in large part, of modifying or changing unexamined perspectives and behavior as a consequence of personalizing objective data. Personal experience and private feeling cannot validly be carried over to distort the logic of demonstrable fact. But the starting point of significant, objective inquiry remains in *our* meaning of things or events.

Logic deals with abstractions. Most of our experience concerns people. Family and social relations, earning a living, raising a family are activities in which the logic of ideas plays a very minor role. The difficulty of applying logic or reason to our unique, intimate experience, so saturated with emotion and feeling, is apparent to anyone who understands the complexities of human relations. The individual who has this understanding of the narrow limits of logic is the one who is likely to have most success in relating logic to life.

This understanding leads to a partial resolution of the dilemma between our meaning of events and the meaning of events, the confusion of what things mean to us with the meaning of things.

The teacher who recognizes this will encourage in students loyalty to logic. If rigorous thinking is welcomed by teachers and developed by pupils, it will at times lead to confusion and frustration but at other times to increased self-respect and satisfaction. Loyalty to ideas, however, is not attained merely by listening to someone who possesses knowledge. The ideas must flower from, and the loyalty be rooted in, the student. Pupils cannot be educated by definition. The teacher's function is to provide fertilizer and nourishment to the seed so that its particular potentialities can be realized.

Any teacher aware of the dilemma set up by pupil needs and the impersonal logic of ideas faces a very troublesome teaching situation. The problem is further complicated if the teacher is also keenly aware of her own biases and feeling. She has to help the student differentiate fact from fancy, opinion from evidence, and at the same time discipline herself to make a similar differentiation.

In the process of attempting to operate on both these levels, she will, in addition, try to avoid the use of arbitrary authority and to avoid a contest of wills between herself and the children. In

other words, she will be aware (1) of what is happening to the class members, (2) of her own struggle, and (3) of the relations between herself and the children. These three levels indicate roughly the areas of the dynamic processes involved in the teaching \(\to\) learning process. Parts Two and Three are concerned with a detailed examination of these processes.

At this point, an appreciation of the complexity of these processes will help us understand why the use of texts, lectures, assigned readings, and periodic tests is so widely accepted and supported. Giving information, handing out data in neat assignments or talks, checking its return through the recitation or examination is the easiest way to teach. Teaching by definition is much less demanding than developing the skill required in helping pupils to learn.

# Problems for Discussion

- 1. Try this brief, spontaneous experiment. Ask the members of your family or a number of your associates (perhaps the entire class) to define in writing, "communism," "capitalism," "education," "religion," and "liberty." Examine the results—and discuss.
- 2. Can you think without words? Does thinking require more than language?
- 3. How would you explain the conclusion that the word "p-a-i-n" refers to bread? What implications does your explanation have for learning?
- 5. What, if anything, is unsound about the famous injunction of Socrates, "Know thyself"? What explains the fact that so often we know what we should do but do not act according to what we know?
- 6. What is the difference between meaning what we say and saying what we mean?
- 7. What did you learn in the seventh grade of the school you attended? Why do you find the question difficult to answer?
- 8. Which of your primary- or secondary-school teachers stand out clearly in your recollections of your school experience? Why?

9. A. N. Whitehead, the famous mathematician and philosopher, stated that one's education consists in what is left after one has forgotten the facts. What does this mean to you?

## Selected Bibliography

- <sup>1</sup> Levi, William Albert. General Education in the Social Studies. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1948. The results of the survey mentioned are reported in detail in this volume.
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#### Chapter Three

# The Assumptions of Orthodox Teaching

Predigested Fact

Teacher Requires—Pupil Repeats

The Fragmentation of Experience

What Are "the" Facts?

Present Participation versus Future Preparation

The Responsibility for Learning

Discipline, Old and New

Knowledge and Learning

Intellect and Emotion

Problems for Discussion

HE SCHOOL SHARES a major responsibility in shaping the lives of twenty million children. It is the one tax-supported institution which children attend regularly. The public school represents the major effort of society to influence and develop the rising generations of adults. The future parents, who will create the family atmosphere, and the future citizens, who will be responsible for meeting the problems of a complex society, spend ten to twelve years of their childhood in the public schools of the country. The importance, therefore, of examining the basic assumptions upon which teachers and school administrators proceed is obvious.

Many teachers and administrators have questioned the orthodox assumptions, and many schools, private and public, operate on different assumptions. The average parent and teacher, however, being products of the traditional school system, have not really accepted the implications of the new assumptions. The actual current practices are still firmly grounded in tradition.

A highly critical account of the assumptions of education would, of course, involve numerous qualifications. There are so many kinds of schools, classrooms, and teachers that any one set of facile generalizations cannot begin to cover the varied practices. This probably holds true even of any single large school system. Our purpose is not to make that kind of critical analysis. We are trying, rather, to examine the over-all general educational philosophy, not as it is reflected in the more recent "newer" education texts, monographs, and "statements of principles," but in daily classroom practice. The following, then, is a telescoped, highly simplified, analytic account of the "educational atmosphere" prevailing in the classrooms of most American schools. We shall examine and briefly discuss nine major popular fallacies in current educational schoolroom practice. In Chapter 12, we shall present a different set of propositions for educational practice, supported by recent research. We believe the assumptions of orthodox teaching are false and unsupported by evidence. There is solid evidence however, to support the propositions dealt with in Chapter 12.

#### Predigested Fact

1. It is assumed that the teacher's responsibility is to set out what is to be learned and that the student's job is to learn it. Knowledge is organized in advance and is classified in advance for purposes of presentation of materials or assignments. The pupil's responsibility is to accept the data, memorize or apply them in predetermined ways, and demonstrate through an examination of one form or another that he has "acquired" the prescribed knowledge. The prescribed data are considered essential by school authorities, not by the learner. The pupils set out to acquire what the authorities declare essential, and the authorities are not to be questioned.

This kind of learning not only prescribes what shall be taught but also prevents the creative participation of the learner in his purposive experience. The textbook or assignments eliminate from the learning experience whatever they do not include.

Some school authorities still believe, for example, that plane geometry is "good for" high-school pupils, that it trains the mind and aids in developing clarity of thought. It may be a surprise to learn that there is evidence in support of the view that geometry plane or spherical, is of no assistance to anyone in thinking more clearly or training the "mind"—except in the field of geometry.

This assumption of predetermining what must be learned also confuses knowledge with learning. Learning must flow from the felt needs of the student and must be directed by the pupil's purposes. Knowledge can be classified in text or in teachers' prepared outlines, but learning flows from pupils' purpose and interest. Learning is a remaking of knowledge rather than an additive collection of isolated data. Pupil-remade knowledge, not teacher-prescribed knowledge, is the key to education (see Chap. 8).

# Teacher Requires—Pupil Repeats

2. It is assumed that knowledge taken on authority is educative in itself. It is good to know what the school authorities say one

should know. If the pupil memorizes the data, he is educated. The task of the teacher is to see that the pupil acquires the subject matter. How this is to be accomplished is secondary. What happens in the process is supposedly unimportant.

Cold-storage, packaged definitions, or data taken on authority, block education. Vocabulary and language are poor substitutes for vision and insight. Consider the teaching of American history in the public schools. The pupils who know American history, it is assumed, are educated in that area. The task of the teacher is to see that American history is acquired.

In many schools the teaching of American history and social science has been "modernized." Social science "units" or problems are studied. It is no longer required that isolated, fragmented facts and dates be memorized. This looks like a hoped-for improvement in helping pupils acquire an understanding of American history or social science. The form of presentation of the data, however, is no substitute for substantive learning by the pupils. The pupils are told or required to read in a "modern" high school social-science or history text about the issues leading to the Civil War. Some authority, the teacher or the textbook author, is the sole source of education, and the pupils are held responsible for knowing what the authority states.

Even if the pupils receive 100 percent, a perfect score, on the examination, in what sense have these data been educative? Are the pupils more critical toward racial, religious, and political doctrines handed down by parents and close associates? Does the pupils' knowledge of the activity of the Committees of Correspondence help to shape his attitudes toward the attacks on civil liberties in our time? When the pupil becomes a businessman, will his knowledge of American history acquired in school (three or four exposures) enter into his stand on the question of government regulation of industry?

Is any of the school subject matter taken on authority educative in itself or is the process of assimilating it the important key to education? Furthermore, if the teacher insists that the data be acquired, and coercive methods of one kind or another are used, what other undesirable habits and attitudes toward learning and knowledge are acquired by the pupils? Not only is subject matter taken on teacher authority not necessarily educative in itself; it can also block education. For example, the teacher's views on literature, history, politics, or economics often become the "view" of the pupil. He accepts what he hears uncritically, and he is not encouraged to challenge the conclusions or opinions of the teacher.\* How often we hear school children offer as the only evidence for a conclusion, "Well, that's what my teacher said!"

# The Fragmentation of Experience

3. It is assumed that education can be obtained through disconnected subjects. The various "core" curricula, life-adjustment courses, and general education programs in primary and secondary schools qualify this assumption. Nevertheless, this assumption operates in most schools of the country. Even in the relatively few schools offering "core" programs, the latter have been limited to one, two, or three subjects.

The development of the core curriculum by a number of the thirty schools in the "Eight-year Study" was a step in the right direction. A unified course of study in social science or English does not, however, create syntheses which have real meaning for the pupil. The core program consists of logically organized subjects or fields of knowledge, some or all of which are related. The logic exists in the relationships among the subject-matter areas, not in the understanding of the pupils.

In sum, the content selected for the core program depends upon a predetermined unit. The core curriculum does not, in itself, resolve the difficulty of fragmented experience; rather it increases in size the fragments of knowledge. The core of education does not lie in a curriculum but in the connection between the data and the

<sup>\*</sup>A classic and well known example is Aristotle, "The" Philosopher. Not until Galileo, in the sixteenth century, did anyone seriously dare to challenge the authority of Aristotle. As a result, many serious errors were believed for centuries.

life of the pupil. Relating subjects to one another must not be confused with educating pupils.

The formal organization of departments or divisions on all levels of education is based upon the assumption that education can be acquired through disconnected subjects. Sixteen "units," made up of Shorthand I, ½ credit; Automobile Driving, ½ credit; Chorus I, ½ credit; Intermediate French, Elementary Algebra, English II, Economic Citizenship, Social Studies, Life Science, Gym (maybe, maybe not), and the like, yield a college preparatory diploma. Change the isolated, fragmentized subjects, add a core program, total up credits, and a business or vocational certificate is the educational reward. What ties all of this together? Who is concerned with putting it together?

Teachers of the physical sciences generally look with disdain upon the "soapy" social science courses. Teachers in the social sciences often consider their laboratory colleagues to be high-class mechanics. Teachers of English fret about punctuation, marginal indentation, and proper salutation.

In one of the reputable schools of New York State, one of the questions on the final English examination was:

Check the most nearly correct answer: Scene II, Act III, in The Merchant of Venice is: a-13 lines; b-30 lines; c-60 lines.

What, precisely, is the significance of the question-or of the answer?

Each of the isolated subjects is presented in a relatively closed conceptual scheme. There are two problems involved here, neither of which is often recognized.

(a) Presenting knowledge in the form of traditional subjects truncates the problem. A part is taken for the whole. All empirical scientific inquiry is, of necessity, analytical. The careful inquirer realizes, however, that he has selected only certain frames of reference for purposes of a particular analysis and that there are a large number of other possible conceptual approaches, depending upon the problem one has selected for analysis.

The teacher's concern with his specialty blinds him to equally

valid approaches to the same phenomena from other points of view. The error is often made of confusing a specific approach, which uses certain conceptual tools, with a subject matter. Thus, human experience is divided into separate substantive compartments, such as history, English, economics, civics, psychology. The subject matter is human experience; the method of analyzing it is historical, psychological, political, or esthetic.

A group of pupils in a social science class was discussing the causes of juvenile delinquency. Several of the pupils maintained that poor family surroundings led to delinquent behavior. Others declared rather vehemently that it resulted from bad economic conditions. Both sides rested their case on the fact that each had studied about delinquency; one group had studied some "psychology" and the other had a course in "economics." Thus the clinching argument for each position was, "Well, that's what we learned in psychology," or "Well, that's what we learned in economics."

All the pupils failed to understand that a specific segment of human behavior was being analyzed and that there were many dimensions of or approaches to understanding that particular kind of human behavior. The specialist in a particular approach is often unable to relate his analysis to other types of analyses. There is an inability to synthesize intellectually.

(b) In addition, on another dimension, there is a failure to help the pupil to synthesize the material with reference to his own flow of experience. A teacher who was discussing the concept of race in a social-science class drew a series of graphs on the board showing that, whatever the physical criterion, the distribution of that trait among the populations of the several "races" was generally the same. There followed a discussion on the part of the teacher of findings regarding the intelligence of different racial groups in which she showed that, given similar cultural surroundings, the intelligence ratings are generally the same for the different groups. The pupils "agreed" at the end of the presentation that there were no inherited differences among races. Among those who agreed were the presidents of two high-school fraternities which excluded Jews and Negroes, and a group of girls who "wouldn't dream" of inviting an Italian classmate to their homes. The an-

thropological data were sounder than the teaching skill of the instructor. She was telling them about the subject of races. For most of the pupils that was "something for the book," not anything intimately tied up with their personal interrelations. (The burden of failure should not, of course, be carried by the teacher alone or even primarily. The family atmosphere of the pupil is probably the principal source of his racial attitudes.)

The intellectually truncated materials, therefore, do not hang together in intellectual conceptual systems, and they also fail to have significant meaning in the experience of the pupil. The teachers fail to make intellectual syntheses, and the pupils are blocked in creating personal syntheses.

The school curriculum consists of a miscellaneous array of isolated data, of partial answers to problems rarely raised by students. There is little significance in the subjects for pupils.

The parceling out of disconnected, unrelated data blocks any genuine educational experience. Indeed, this procedure adds to the confusion of the pupil if he takes it seriously—but he generally does not. He takes it to pass examinations. He takes the examination seriously but not the meaning of what he is being examined on.

#### What Are "the" Facts?

4. It is assumed that the subject matter is the same to the learner as to the teacher. "The" facts are recorded in books or presented by the teacher. The facts are supposed to be the same for all pupils; they are to learn them in the given contexts, in the same order, and in a given time.

What is "a fact"? Let us take a simple example familiar to all. A spoon is placed in a glass of water. The handle of the spoon extends straight out of the water but appears bent in the water. The question is raised, "Is the spoon bent or straight?" The correct answer depends upon what "the" spoon means. If "the" spoon refers to spoon-in-liquid, it is bent. The frame of reference determines the question to be raised, the answer to be sought, and,

hence, whether the statement is factual. A fact is a statement about a concrete phenomenon in a specific frame of reference.

When the United Supreme Court justices deliver their opinion on a case, each has before him a printed record of "the facts" in the case which has been appealed. What explains split decisions of 5-4 or 6-3? The frames of reference of the several members of the majority opinion and minority dissent differ; hence, the legal implications of the facts differ; hence, the facts themselves take on a different character. Indeed the judicial opinion determines "the" facts.

A teacher stated to the class that philosophy was the "hand-maid" to religion. Something led the teacher to interrupt her statement and ask, "Of course, all of you know what is meant by 'handmaid to religion.'" One of the members of the class replied quite seriously, "Sure, made by hand."

What is a fact for the author of a textbook or for the teacher need not be a fact for the pupil, since he is not seeking an answer to a hypothesis or problem to which the facts may be a partial answer. The pupil, as a rule, is obtaining the teacher's facts merely to pass the examination. That is the pupil's frame of reference. His problem is to pass the examination. This is why, so often, we hear pupils say, "What are we supposed to know?" "What must we do?" "How long must the paper be?"

# Present Participation versus Future Preparation

5. It is assumed that education prepares the student for later life rather than that it is a living experience. This is reflected by the name given to the ceremony marking the completion of elementary school. We call it "commencement," the beginning, although it is difficult to discover what is begun other than high school. Seven to nine years have been spent in preparation for a start.

Psychologically, the pupil lives in, with, and through his school environment for twelve years. The twelve years of primary and secondary education are twelve years of living experience. To

be sure, the future years are colored by the living experiences of the present. The only time the pupil, or any of us, has, however, is the present. One cannot live on borrowed time because time cannot be borrowed. It can be spent only out of current assets. The only time one has is the present, and if you live in the present you have no time to spend.

The pupil is living in, with, and through his school environment at every moment. He is undergoing classroom experiences fraught with all kinds of loves, hates, satisfactions, tensions, anxieties, hopes, and fears. He brings to the classroom a whole galaxy of emotions. He is in continuous association with others and is reacting to, against, and with fellow pupils and teachers.

For better or worse, he acquires habits of workmanship, feelings of adequacy or inferiority, language habits, social aptitudes, ways of meeting or avoiding authority, ways of relating to members of the opposite sex, and the ability or inability to accept differences in others. What he does or is permitted to do with the facts and ideas dealt with determines his respect for evidence and his loyalty to truth. Not only his awareness of ideas but his commitment to values depends upon his classroom experiences. All of this involves present participation, not preparation for the future. The most efficient preparation for dealing with possible future experience is the development of present abilities, tools, and techniques which relate to present problems felt and stated by the pupils.

The school environment is one which justifiably selects out of the tangled web of personal and social experience certain aspects which can be viewed analytically. The danger is always present that the abstractions substituted for the present realities are far removed from the living experiences of the pupils. The abstractions of the classroom can become an artificial world of concepts unrelated to the present purposes of the pupils and to the pupils' present readiness to understand and assimilate the abstractions.

Many problems of classroom discipline now become clear. Teachers complain about the inattention of pupils, their lack of interest in the teacher's or textbook assignment, in what the teacher is saying. But pupils are always paying attention to whatever interests them.

Being compelled to attend to ideas or to participate in activities which have little meaning or interest makes one restless, fatigued, or bored. Means of escaping such a situation are quickly sought and discovered or created. The pupil then acts in ways which disturb the competing interests of the teacher. Instead of engaging in overt annoying behavior, the pupil can feign interest by appearing attentive. This lays the groundwork for the habits of skillful inattention, which is also characteristic of many college students in the classroom.

Ideas and activities unrelated to the direct needs and present experiences of the pupils will not and cannot become educationally meaningful to the pupil except in the negative sense of building resistance to, and dislike for, the ideas and activities.

The assumption that education primarily prepares the student for later life is false, since education is a living experience. Its effects are immediately present and will color as well as determine subsequent experience.

# The Responsibility for Learning

6. It is assumed that the teacher is responsible for the pupil's acquiring of knowledge. If the teacher is responsible for the pupil's acquiring of knowledge, then the pupil is not responsible. The teacher asks the questions. The pupil answers the teacher's questions. The teacher, it can be assumed, knows the answers. Then why ask the questions? To discover whether the pupil can repeat the teacher's or textbook's answer. This tests whether the pupil can repeat what the teacher knows.

Teachers fail to recognize that all genuine learning is, in the last analysis, self-learning, self-discipline.

The word discipline is derived from the Latin discere, which means "to learn." A pupil is disciplined not when he is compelled to attend class by threat of bad grades and failure, promise of stars and medals, parental or school pressure, or competitive striving. A pupil disciplines himself when he uncovers difficulties and discovers himself. No one can possibly discipline or motivate another in any

self-creative sense. All one can do is to help another motivate him-self; hence the problem is the pupil's problem.

It follows, then, that the pupil should be encouraged to raise his questions for the teacher to answer. If the question is truly his, and he is free to raise it, the chances are he will inquire about matters which interest him. The pupil's development and acquisition of knowledge depend upon how far he is permitted to examine the teacher. His success in the group or class should depend upon how eager and able he is to use the teacher to discover what he wants to know and what he can do about the subject matter or problem.

The responsibility and motivation for acquiring knowledge should be placed upon the learner. It is his course, not the teacher's. For learning to take place, the effort must stem from the pupil. One who observes two-year-olds at play—or fifteen- or twenty-year-olds, or anyone—working at what interests them knows how well motivated they are.

The teacher cannot be responsible for the pupil's learning. Her responsibility is limited to performing as well as she can the role of a skillful helper. How the pupil wants to use the teacher's service is beyond the control of the teacher. One of the reasons why teachers feel responsible for what pupils "learn" is that they want to establish a good record in the examinations which is alleged evidence of their competence. Relatively few teachers are easily convinced that the criterion of their competence is not the results of examinations but how well they perform their daily job. (This point is expanded in Chap. 8.)

#### Discipline, Old and New

7. It is assumed that pupils must be coerced into working on some tasks. This assumption is closely related to the preceding one. A task or problem which has no interest for a pupil will not hold his attention. Attention flows from interest. The teacher or school

authorities declare that the subject matter is good for the pupil whether he is interested or not. If the pupil shows no interest, he must be "forced to pay attention" through one means or another.

It is a strange, psychologically unsound notion that finding a task disagreeable leads to good results, that it is good "discipline." There is some truth in this provided that the person, himself, undertaking the task realizes the need for struggle and persistence. In this case, the person deliberately assumes the responsibility for unpleasant effort. The coercion, or compulsion, or threat is not external to his own motivation and is not felt as an imposition of an alien will. The disagreeable task is self-imposed in the larger context of an important end or a desired good.

Forcing disagreeable tasks on pupils—demanding, for example, certain reports on readings which hold no inherent interest for the pupil—creates distaste and habits of slovenly workmanship, of getting by with the least effort, and, often, of dishonesty and cheating. One wonders how many thousands of adults miss the grandeur of Shakespeare's tragedies or the sheer beauty of mathematics because of unpleasant high-school experiences with Shakespeare, algebra, and plane geometry.

The inference is not to be drawn that Shakespeare and mathematics should be removed from the high school curriculum. The fault lies in the poor and ineffective techniques employed to capture interest and to win attention. Love of literature or mathematics, like love for a human being, cannot be forced upon anyone.

Parents cannot make children good, although they can compel conformity. Compelled conformity is not goodness but the response to fear and anxiety. Conformity to the disagreeable tasks at school does not lead to desirable discipline. It is surrendering to the will of power and authority. It breeds submissiveness, hostility, and resentment, and it frequently leads to a denial of those feelings and to self-justification for the shoddy performance. This actually robs the pupil of self-responsibility and self-discipline. He does what others demand or require without any real acceptance of the need for the efforts he has to make (see Chap. 10). The assumption that pupils must be coerced into performing certain

disagreeable tasks reflects a false understanding of the nature of genuine discipline.

# Knowledge and Learning

8. It is assumed that knowledge is more important than learning. The problem of the classroom is not to transmit "facts" but to help the pupil translate the knowledge so that it becomes meaningful in his experience. In other words, the most important job of the teacher is to encourage the pupil to want to learn. It is the process of learning and not the answers to questions which constitutes the core of education.

Learning occurs when the entire personality of the pupil is involved. How much one knows is an indication of memory or the ability to manipulate facts. Memorizing the names, addresses, and telephone numbers listed in the Chicago telephone directory or the contents of the World Almanac would be an extraordinary feat of memory—and an absurd waste of time and energy. The purpose of the directory is to save time and energy. The important matter is to learn how to use the directory and, analogously, how to use the thousands of bits of information floating around in the texts and talks of the classroom.

The traditional classroom procedure calls for right answers from the pupils. A high grade is the reward for knowing the right answers. The goal of the course is the passing of the examination, not what happens during the process of learning. The average teacher is concerned with what the pupil knows, not with the problem of how the pupil learns. Alfred North Whitehead once remarked that an education consists of what is left after one has forgotten the facts.

Knowledge which is meaningful is not merely cerebral. Genuine knowledge involves the viscera, the muscles, and the glands; it becomes learning. When the pupil does something to what he knows, when he applies knowledge in some way of his own, he learns. The teacher's chief concern, now, is how much the pupil

knows, not how well he learns. The pupil, not the book or the examination, should be the problem of the teacher.

#### Intellect and Emotion

9. It is assumed that education is primarily an intellectual process. This assumption is a corollary of the preceding one. Every vital experience is perceived, felt, and understood as a whole. School children are vitally concerned with economic status, social class, authority, and all the expected behavior patterns accompanying them. Feelings of status, of self-esteem, are involved in meeting with classmates and teacher. Children must learn when to defer and when to submit. Personal relationships to superiors, peer groups, and subordinates have to be achieved and patterned. Spontaneous responses have to be inhibited. Evasions of objects and persons because of fear of authority have to be learned.

The pupil is less impressed by the statements of the text or the teacher than by the feeling tone of the classroom—that is, the feelings of the persons in the room, pupils and teacher. The calmness or harshness of voice, the smile or frown, the tight lip or relaxed tilt of the head are more readily communicated because they are more quickly sensed. The whole business of elementary and secondary education occurs in a matrix of deep emotional experience. What pupils learn, and how they learn, depends upon their emotional sets as well as upon the logic of ideas.

"The dilemma of education," declares Lawrence K. Frank, "arises from belief in man as a rational being in whom emotion can be controlled by reason and intelligence. Educational programs shrink from any frank acceptance of the underlying personality make-up and emotional reactions of students as entering into the educational situation because to do so would bring a widespread collapse of the whole educational philosophy and undermining of approved pedagogy.<sup>1</sup>

Alfred North Whitehead stated that the attempt to educate by reason without understanding and dealing with the emotional

contexts is "one of the most fatal, erroneous and dangerous conceptions ever introduced into the theory of education." 2

The genuine interests and needs of pupils are, in large part, emotional. Yet in most classrooms the false assumption is made that the educational situation is essentially concerned with knowing facts.

Many readers, we feel, are in essential agreement with what has been stated and analyzed. They may disagree on some points or want to qualify others, but the general picture will be familiar, we believe, to practicing and prospective teachers.

We now turn to Part Two, "The Teaching → Learning Process," in which we try to show how a different classroom atmosphere supports a qualitatively different kind of learning on the part of teacher and students. The different classroom setting, ordinarily, does not "just" occur. It arises out of increased professional understanding of what occurs in the teaching → learning process and the beter use of teacher skill which accompanies such understanding.

# Problems for Discussion

- 1. What is the teacher's responsibility regarding the subject matter of a course? Should she exercise authority in selecting the material? How should she use that authority?
- 2. Many children do not relish arithmetic, algebra, or plane geometry. Should they, nevertheless, be required to study these subjects? Should arithmetic be required but not algebra or geometry? Why should not musical appreciation be a required subject? Should "taking gym" be optional? Do the school authorities know what children need by way of knowledge? On what basis do they know what subjects are good for children? Can the pupils judge what is good for them to know?
- 3. Jesus was not graduated from elementary school. Shake-speare did not attend college. Were they educated?

Is a plumber an educated person?

A German scholar planned a sixteen-volume work on The History of the Duel. (He died after completing six of the volumes.) Would you, on the basis of these facts, consider him educated?

A well-known psychiatrist, engaged in private practice and a member of a famous medical school in New York City, returned to his home one night at 11 P.M. His wife, in the eighth month of pregnancy, was resting in her room, upstairs. The psychiatrist, who had not had dinner, noticed that the dining-room table was cleared. He shouted to his wife upstairs, "You slut, can't you have some dinner prepared for me?" Do you consider this psychiatrist an educated person?

4. If you were asked, "What important points were raised in Chapter 3, what would your answer be? Would your fellow students give the same answer? If the answers are not the same, what accounts for the difference in the replies?

5. Do you now have a future or may you have a future? What implications does your answer have for the learning experience?

Do your past experiences determine or condition your present experiences? What else, if anything, enters your present educational experience?

- 6. What does "acquiring" knowledge mean? What do you consider a genuine test of knowledge?
- 7. Many of you no longer study the piano. Most adults regret having discontinued and wish that their parents had insisted upon a continuation of the lessons and compelled them to practice when they were youngsters in high school. Yet they complained and rebelled at being compelled to practice. Should you have been coerced into practicing the piano?
  - 8. How do you encourage people to want to learn?
- 9. Which is more important for learning, knowing an answer or raising the question to be answered?
- 10. Assume that you are concerned with the questions above. Is the concern you feel primarily an intellectual or emotional one? What seems to be at stake? What "parts of you" are chiefly involved? Are you seeking "correct" answers to the questions? Why? If you were told there are no correct answers, would you feel better

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about yourself? Why? Do you think there are correct answers to these questions?

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- <sup>1</sup> Frank, Lawrence K. "Dilemma of Leadership," Psychiatry, Vol. 2, August 1939, p. 247.
- <sup>2</sup> Whitehead, Alfred N. The Aims of Education and Other Essays. New York: New American Library, 1949. The volume, first published by the Macmillan Co. in 1929, includes essays on technical education and its relation to science and literature, on the place of the classics in education, and on the place of mathematics.

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Part II

# THE TEACHING ↔ LEARNING PROCESS

#### Chapter Four

# The Classroom Atmosphere

The Attitude of the Teacher

The Acceptance of Difference

Pupil Participation

Problems for Discussion

HE PRESENT CHAPTER and the five chapters which follow it deal with some of the basic understandings and skills which enter into a fruitful teaching ⇔learning process. A teacher may eventually become so familiar and comfortable with these basic skills and insights that she ceases to be aware of them except when she chooses to. The situation is analogous to the process of breathing. We inhale and exhale without, most of the time, being aware of the process. Generally we become aware of the process only when normal breathing is interfered with. Similarly, watching one's teaching skills and performing skillfully are so closely allied that the transition from conscious awareness to attitudinal performance is imperceptible. Indeed, just because one practices skillfully, the slightest false note strikes one stridently and rushes into consciousness.

The skilled teacher may be compared to the sensitive symphony conductor. He knows the musical score, he controls the dynamics, he gives the various sections their entrances. He is highly aware of what is happening and what is to follow—and he performs artistically. He makes music. He sings with and communicates to the members of the orchestra even as he knowingly directs them.

How does one increase teaching skill? It is unlikely that there is any one way or that any two teachers can proceed in the same way. There are, however, common factors present in all fruitful teaching \in learning situations which every teacher can, initially, know about. Knowledge about the teaching \in learning process can gradually transform itself into a sensitive and skilled awareness and use of oneself.

The following chapters describe one teacher's awareness of what enters into the teaching \in learning process. If the reader can discover and appropriate something for himself in what is described, if he recognizes in what follows something of his own experiences, this will provide some evidence of the common factors present in significant teaching.

In order to learn significantly the learner must want to learn.

He will learn better and learn that which matters to him if he does not need to feel defensive and if he is not threatened. He has to feel free to face his uncertainties, limitations, and inadequacies. Teaching will be improved through the creation of situations which make meaningful learning most likely.

Skilled teaching will be characterized by:

- 1. the creation of an accepting atmosphere (Chap. 4),
- 2. the structuring of a "reality-centered" classroom (Chap. 5),
- 3. an awareness of the teacher's function and need to focus (Chap. 6),
- 4. an understanding of when, how, and where to challenge the pupils (Chap. 7),
- 5. an acceptance of the premise that learning is essentially personal (Chap. 8),
- 6. and that it depends upon self-motivation and self-discipline (Chap. 9).

Unquestionably there are other factors which enter into skilled teaching. We have selected for analysis and illustration the foregoing characteristics as being among the essential ones. As a teacher reaches the point where she is comfortably sure, most of the time, of what she is doing and about what is happening in the classroom, she is teaching skillfully and artistically. She possesses a sure sense of direction and has learned how to make better use of herself for the sake of pupil development.

The spirit and atmosphere of the classroom arise out of the pupil-pupil and teacher-pupil relations. These complex relations depend, in turn, upon the mutual expectations of teacher and pupils. Age grouping, racial and religious affiliation, role performance, status achievement, sex ratio, power position, prestige, and other factors define the expectations of the group. The fact remains, however, that the teacher more than anyone else has it within her power to establish the feeling tone of the classroom. She can act within the traditional patterns of teacher-pupil relations or she can modify her own and pupil expectations.

One of the important characteristics of skilled teaching is the

creation of an atmosphere which encourages pupils to question, challenge, and contribute to one another's and to the teacher's growth.

Through her attitudes and her ability to communicate to the pupils that their differences will be respected, she can move a long way toward stimulating pupil participation.

### The Attitude of the Teacher

The teacher who progresses in reaching a more and more comfortable acceptance of herself will be able to accept others. Progress in understanding others may also help in understanding oneself. Growing acceptance of self, which is never complete, means that one realizes the piebald personality one is. There is a willingness to struggle against the common need to control or to dominate in order to shield one against recognizing limitations, inadequacies, or insecurities in oneself.

The teacher who has struggled and continues to struggle with herself attains a deepening insight into the similar struggle the pupil undergoes. She becomes aware of the common tendency to seek an out from conflict by using the pupil as a target for her dissatisfaction. What she says can be attacked, questioned, or criticized without her feeling personally abused and therefore counterattacking the pupil. This leads to increased freedom for the pupil, since he is not criticized for his criticism or disagreement. Let us glance at an opening meeting of one of our groups.

INSTRUCTOR: Good evening and welcome. I suppose before the evening is over we'll have a chance to become acquainted with each other. I'm wondering what we've come together for.

Would someone clarify our purpose? [A long silence]

ELIZABETH: I want to learn about skilled teaching.
INSTRUCTOR: Have you any other purposes? [Silence]

81 STELLA: Well, frankly, we've got to have some project for the course and I thought since this comes the same night as the course I'd sign up. [Laughter]

INSTRUCTOR: That certainly makes a lot of sense. Perhaps others of you have some additional reasons?

HARRY: Does this course have a final examination?

INSTRUCTOR: I really haven't given that any thought, but I'm certain it's important to all of you. Perhaps later on all of us can explore that together. Won't you agree, however, that we might first explore what we are to do before we talk about examinations? [Laughter] Who has some suggestions?

MURIEL: I understood you were to tell us about how to become skilled teachers.

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder whether I am to tell you or whether all of us together should explore that question.

STELLA [With an aggrieved tone]: Oh, is this going to be one of those talk fests where everybody gets nowhere fast? [Laughter]

INSTRUCTOR: I guess all of us realize how you feel. So many discussion groups wander all over the lot and waste so much time without accomplishing much. Maybe we'll be more fortunate since all of us are teachers and chances are we're really interested in the question. It's up to us, isn't it, to try and make our discussions meaningful.

STELLA: Sounds good, but I'm skeptical.

INSTRUCTOR: So am I [Laughter], but I guess we're entitled to a chance to see what we can do.

The teacher realizes at the outset that the class members will be afraid of one another and of the instructor. They look to him as the authority who is to tell them. They expect to listen. Aware of this, the teacher attempts from the first meeting to modify their expectations and to redefine his own role and the part the members are to play. Thus, he asks the group members what they think the purposes of the meetings are. There is a long silence, which is to be

expected. People are afraid. They fear disapproval. The instructor also remains silent, giving the members a chance to try him and one another out slowly and cautiously to discover how far they can go and what the consequences are likely to be. Stella breaks the ice by, "Well, frankly . . ." She starts half apologetically, realizing that ordinarily a student does not tell the teacher that the reason for taking a course is the convenience of time. The releasing laughter of the group reflects this realization. The instructor joined in the laughter and added that it was a sensible reason.

A few moments later Stella risks a bit more of her real feelings and wonders aloud whether the teacher's suggestion about exploring the question won't lead to "one of those talk fests." The teacher reacts to the laughter by showing his understanding of Stella's feelings and agreeing with her skepticism.

Stella's initial "contest" with the instructor encourages her and the other members of the group to feel more free to say what they want. Because he knows that uncertainty and fear of disapproval are present in the early meetings of every class, he understands that the resulting criticism is directed against him as a teacher and not as a person. Consequently his reaction to it is professional rather than personal. He therefore tries to create an atmosphere which invites participation and permits difference of expression.

The following comment is an evaluation made during the sixth meeting.

moments of meeting with the leader, who began by asking, "Why are you here?" I remember the answers' being at first dutiful, standard pedagogical answers, what students thought an instructor would be pleased to hear. The instructor's manner in commenting on these, even more than his words, brought the first frank statement from a member as to how she really felt. I can still feel the intentness with which the

class watched the instructor when this first frank statement was made. We watched his face to see what expression was registered upon hearing the comments and in replying to them. He simply accepted the statement.

We stated a moment ago that fear is generally to be expected when a group made up of relative strangers meets for the first few times. It is of interest to compare the third meeting of another group of teachers. The first two meetings had been taken up with general complaints directed against supervisors, parents, principals, and pupils. The first part of the third meeting consisted of a spirit-less discussion as to whether city children were "a different breed" from rural children. The group members were seizing upon any convenient theme which would not really involve them.

INSTRUCTOR: May I ask a question? We've been together for fifty minutes tonight and for four hours previously. Some of you may have noticed that each of the twelve members of our group has contributed to our discussions. That is a very promising sign that this group is "going places." This is the question: What do you think we have accomplished thus far in exploring "What makes a skilled teacher?"

CORA: I'm sure of one thing. None of us is sure of the problem we want to discuss or of what we are talking about. At least, I'm not.

NED: I think all of us are running away. We don't know each other and we're plain afraid of each other. We've been feeling each other out, seeing how far we can trust each other. I think we'll have to wait until someone breaks the ice and says: "Look, this is my real problem, and I want some help. I'm the one who is causing the mischief in my classroom, and if I'm going to improve my skill I'll need help."

GREGORY: I think we're all cautious and careful. We're afraid we'll say something stupid.

HARRY: I agree.

CORA: Sure, that's right.

NED: I think most adults, and that includes teachers, aren't secure in their personal lives and they carry that into the classroom.

INSTRUCTOR: Do others of you share Ned's, Cora's, Harry's, and Gregory's feeling?

MABEL: That's why I'm here. I do feel that way.

INSTRUCTOR: Maybe you'd like to explore why all of us, and I certainly include myself, feel this insecurity at times?

By including himself, the leader, who does experience uneasiness with a new group, tries to communicate the feeling that all have this problem, that it is natural, and that they may comfortably discuss it. This is the opening wedge into the theme of skilled teaching in this group.

The teacher accepts students' statements and expressions of attitude without moral judgment. He invites them to state their interests and their approach and encourages a climate which supports student participation. He makes suggestions which may be accepted or just as comfortably rejected. The absence of threat lowers student defensiveness. On the contrary, the student senses the respect for his integrity and will be inclined toward free participation in his development.

There is no single way to develop this kind of educational climate. Any teacher, however, who genuinely believes in this approach will discover many ways to communicate her attitude to the pupils. The pupils, with their traditional expectations of teacher-pupil attitude, will at first not know what to make of the new climate. Some will be puzzled, others irritated, and some will complain. The negativism will, in time, dissipate itself. Almost all of the pupils will later express their appreciation for the relative freedom from pressure which they experienced.

The teacher may wonder how this is possible when require-

ments such as assigned readings and examinations have to be met. There are limitations and specific requirements in all teaching  $\leftrightarrow$  learning situations. The limits may be so rigidly imposed or enforced by circumstances beyond the control of the teacher that the classroom atmosphere we have been describing cannot be hoped for. This will be a rare case. The fact of limitations is usually not the stumbling block. It is the attitude in dealing with the limitations which is important. Thus, if fifty pages of history must be covered within a given time, according to the state or school syllabus, the teacher simply conveys to the pupils that this is something neither she nor the pupils can control and asks how they would propose fulfilling the requirement. It is their course, with all its attendant external limitations.

The teacher's attitude is the important differential in creating whatever freedom the limitations allow. The least she can do is not to add to the existing institutional pressures a harmful attitude of pressure and threat in teacher-pupil relations. Indeed, she can make use of the external limits by helping students to realize how one must accommodate oneself to requirements over which one has no control. That is a worth-while lesson for both teacher and pupils.

Often pupils will complain to a permissive teacher that although they feel comfortable and free in her class they dare not express their real attitudes in other classes. The permissive instructor can present several alternatives. Would it be desirable to change the class's procedure to conform with that of other classes? Generally the pupils agree that this alternative is highly undesirable. The conclusion is usually reached that one conforms to the expectations of other teachers, or challenges the classroom procedures, and explores how far one can go in modifying them. Different situations call for different adjustments.

# The Acceptance of Difference

The attitude of acceptance by the teacher will, if it is genuine, communicate itself to the pupils. When they realize that the "authority" does not exercise her power arbitrarily, that she does

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not insist on being right, on having her way, and that she even makes and admits mistakes, pupils tend to become more accepting of differences, their own and those of others. They express more of their real selves and become less defensive about their limitations. If no one accuses them, there is no need to be defensive. If their differences are accepted, they learn to accept differences in others. This is illustrated by the following discussion during one of the early meetings.

JERRY (to Teacher): I've been listening quietly to what you've been saying tonight and I don't agree with most of what you've said. You haven't given any real proof for your statements.

You're quite right. I haven't given any proof. I've merely given my opinions based on personal observation. Perhaps our experiences, yours and mine, differ. Would you want to tell us why you disagree?

JERRY: Just because my experience has been different, I guess. I can't give any proof either, so I'd just as soon stick with what I believe.

INSTRUCTOR: That seems reasonable enough to me.

JERRY: This doesn't mean, you know, that I'm not willing to change my mind later on, provided I'm convinced.

The instructor accepts Jerry's disagreement and even supports his stand. The questioning of "authority" is, in fact, encouraged by the instructor's saying, "You're quite right." "That seems reasonable enough to me." Jerry, in his last remark, feels comfortable in asserting his difference, at the same time expressing a willingness to change his mind later on. The teacher not only does not insist on his stated position, he accepts the position of the student.

Feeling accepted, Jerry again expresses his difference but qualifies it by adding, "provided I'm convinced."

The following exchange helped all of us. We became quite involved in the question of a teacher's wanting to be popular with the students. The instructor expressed the view that whether or not he was popular was unimportant. The important matter was to challenge pupils. The record is as follows.

CARL: Then you're saying that the teacher . . . .

INSTRUCTOR: The teacher has a professional role to perform.

CARL: You mean to . . . .

INSTRUCTOR: He has no right to use the students for his needs.

CARL: Excuse me, isn't that what you just did?

INSTRUCTOR: What do you mean?

STELLA: Maybe we can play back the last minute of the record.

INSTRUCTOR: Check. I get it. You mean I interrupted Carl several times. I was so insistent on my point of view that I wouldn't let him speak. I certainly pulled a "honey" that time. Quite unprofessional and unskilled, I'd say.

ELIZABETH: I wish I had a dollar every time I do that.

JERRY: I'd settle for a nickel.

Carl criticized the instructor quite easily, and Stella suggested the playback. They are expressing the kind of feeling, the kind of questioning of a teacher, which is too rare in the classroom. The instructor endorses their criticism of him. Hearing the admission of the instructor's mistake, Elizabeth and Jerry do not hesitate to express a similar limitation. No one has to be defensive. The teacher, in admitting his errors rather than justifying them, helps pupils to admit their limitations. All of us felt the increased respect for difference which followed the incident.

A week later the question of disciplining pupils was being discussed.

carl: I think that what we're saying has far-reaching consequences for our pupils. I mean the important thing is to accept differences in behavior and give them a chance to talk about their feelings and get rid of a lot of bad feeling and fear. It seems to me that we, the teachers, are the ones to create the kind of atmosphere in which children will feel free to express what bothers them.

ELIZABETH: If we don't, they continue to feel bad and then behave in ways which cover up how bad they feel. Gee, it strikes me now that so-called "disciplinary problems" are to a large degree started by teachers' making children afraid of them. My Lord, that's so!

ELIZABETH: Well, I announced to my class that we were going to a puppet show, and one of the children said: "Well I'm not going to go. I don't like that show." I thought to myself, "Oh, oh! here's where I'm going to have some trouble. I'm going to send him to the principal, and I'm going to have trouble." I wanted to say to the kid, "You are going to go; the whole class is going," but I thought that was wrong and I didn't know what to say. I suddenly remembered last week and just felt the kid had the right to feel the way he did. I decided to speak to the child's mother to try to find out what lay behind the child's fear of the story.

the show doesn't mean that the child's difference, his feelings of not wanting to go, shouldn't be respected. He may still have to go, but we can accept the fact that he doesn't like it without condemning him.

up the idea of accepting difference which we have discussed above as follows:

cora: I noticed the ease with which we can talk about each other's failings or differences. It seems to me that our pupils and colleagues can be helped in a similar way if we leave them alone. That's one of the things we've been saying so often. Not left alone in the sense that nobody pays attention to them but left alone in that they should be helped to come in when they feel like coming in and to be able to say what they want.

Creating an accepting spirit in the classroom when problems of "conduct" arise presents another difficult challenge. Undoubtedly, there are a number of girls and boys in the overcrowded schools of our large cities who present behavior difficulties which simply cannot be met by the available facilities of the school system. They do not respond to any known form of help. We certainly do not have an answer to this. The New York City High School Principals Association reported, in May 1952, that their teachers could no longer cope with the disrupting influences in the classrooms of certain delinquent boys and girls. Whatever facilities they used, the teacher could not help those children. They asked for their removal from the classes through new legislation which would permit children to leave school altogether at the age of fifteen. Obviously, this does not solve the problem. But what effective alternative can the reader suggest?

What about the larger number of ordinary cases of classroom deportment? Can the teacher help here? She can, by helping the student understand his own behavior.

STANLEY: There certainly are times in a class when you have to control the group.

- MURIEL: Well, that would depend upon the size of the class and the situation.
- JERRY: Well, that's precisely the problem. You can't lay down a rule about it. You have to feel guilty, fight against the fact that your authority is being questioned, sweat it through, keeping in mind what's good for the child, and decide when and where to take hold. No one can teach you that.
- PHILIP: If teachers were able to show the pupils some of their own mistakes, that would increase the respect of the children for the teacher and would encourage the children to admit their mistakes and not be defensive. If the teacher doesn't set herself up as a paragon of virtue, the pupils are more apt to admit misconduct and to control themselves. They won't fight authority in the hundreds of ways that kids do.
- stella: Well, there are some children who talk all the time, and there's nothing I can do about it. I talk to the parents, and they're not effective. In the halls and stairways the children are supposed to be quiet, but they run around like wild Indians. The kids just yack, yack, yack all day long. Now I've got to keep order. [Silence]
- INSTRUCTOR: I think comments might be helpful. [The instructor deliberately refrains from any interpretation at this point. He simply accepts Stella's difference and invites other points of view.]
- GREGORY: I was struck by Stella's description of the children's behavior. Apparently it wasn't the behavior so much as the disturbance it set up in Stella.
- stella: If I didn't take hold, there would be pandemonium in that classroom. I've got to have a chance to do some talking too. In history and social studies, things have to be explained, and if the kids are talking all the time I simply can't explain them. I don't want anyone out of their seats. If that isn't checked, I cannot get any work done.
- INSTRUCTOR: Stella, were you condemning the children when you said, "Yack, yack, yack"? [Here is an instance where the teacher was dead wrong in his timing. He thought he might,

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at this point, help Stella to recognize that her own need to control was getting in her way. Stella ignored the remark and continued with what she felt.]

STELLA: Well, I don't know, but that's what they were doing. Children can be quiet and they shouldn't be talking all the time. The kids are simply getting on my nerves, and I can't take it much longer.

HILDA: I, too, came home tired tonight and I had met some of these problems during the day. In my own case I was disturbed because of my own incapacities to know what to do. I didn't feel the children were to blame. I think the problem is mine, to discover some way of meeting with this. I think the problem with me is a personal one.

STELLA: I haven't got any personal problems.

GREGORY: I don't understand, Stella, how any of us can divorce one aspect of our problems from those which arise in the classroom.

stella: In our school there are certain things we have to do to control our children. Our children are supposed to stay in their rooms five hours a day. To let them run around and be happy is one thing, but to have the situation under control, since they have to be in the room, is another story. Our orders are to keep them under control, and the orders must be obeyed.

us. But aren't there different ways of carrying out these conditions, where a teacher can work with the children instead of against them? I have found that children generally understand the need for rules. That is, if they are given a chance to discuss the rules and to understand why the rules are made, by and large, they are cooperative.

STELLA: You don't teach in W——, I guess, do you? Well, W—— School children are a different type than out of W——

HARRY: I think children, in and out of W——, are basically the same. I know Stella's problem, but I deal with it a bit

differently. I try leaving children on their own. Now the principal didn't think that was going to be wise. Sometimes the results haven't been too happy, but, on the whole, there's no question that our discipline is much better because the children have assumed more responsibility for their own conduct.

STELLA: I leave them on their own too, sometimes—that is, when I have to leave class to go down and get my pay check.

HARRY: Suppose, Stella, you were the child, and you were constantly told to keep quiet. How would you feel?

ing them. They want someone to control them. You ask me how I would feel if I were the child. I know how I would feel—I want someone to control me. I remember when I was a child, and I was a very good child, I didn't interrupt. I never interrupted a teacher. I never talked back to a teacher. I always got A's in conduct.

HARRY: Maybe that's precisely where the problem lies?

STELLA: I used to be the monitor for the teacher; I'd go for her lunch; in fact, I was the teacher's pet. Now I find myself in a situation as an adult where the children aren't that way. They're wild.

HARRY: You say, Stella, you got A's; you were a good child. Well, maybe that's why you expect so much of these children?

STELLA: Why shouldn't they be good children?

HARRY: Well, perhaps they need more approval and love from you?

STELLA: Oh bosh, they have enough love in their homes.

HARRY: What is a good child?

STELLA: A good child is one who doesn't irritate you.

cora: Your conception of a good child is altogether different from my conception.

STELLA: You certainly can't be irritated five hours continuously all day long and call a child a good child.

Stella is a classic example of many school teachers who re-

flect the sincere, well-intentioned, traditional approach to children. Her defenses are almost impenetrable through ordinary discourse. She fails utterly to sense how her own tensions are being expressed in the classroom and how she imposes her needs upon the children. She has to dominate and to control because of her own inadequacy and insecurity. She is unaware of her contradictions and confusion, which are so apparent to others. She is not malicious, but she innocently exerts terrific pressure upon the children and instigates the conflicts she wishes to avoid. It is a rare child who could relax and breathe easily in the classroom atmosphere generated by her. It is difficult to imagine an average pupil's daring to contradict anything she might say. The type of teacher Stella represents is not likely to help in the development of the creative powers of children.

Let us not lose sight of the principal point. Notice the freedom with which Stella expresses her minority, and honest, opinion, and how she is, equally, freely challenged by her fellow students. Harry respects Stella's attitude, although at the same time he expresses a contrary view. The instructor quietly accepts different points of view and does not take sides throughout this discussion. The acceptance of difference encourages its expression.

At this point the reader may feel a certain degree of impatience at Stella's inability to see the causes of her rigidity with pupils and may raise a question as to whether the instructor does not have an obligation to help her more directly. But the fact remains—and clinical and classroom experience has repeatedly documented it—that an individual cannot gain any more insight than he is ready for, that no genuine learning can be forced or hastened.

## Pupil Participation

Meaningful participation by pupils depends upon their genuine involvement in the data under consideration. The pupil learns meaningfully only what he is interested in learning. Ideally, therefore, the pupils should share in (though by no means control) the development and management of the curriculum.

Let us assume, however, that the framework of subject matter or administration is rather rigid. Given the requirement, how does the teacher and how do the pupils go about meeting it? The pupils can participate considerably in the meeting of the requirement. The following excerpt, taken from the fifth meeting of one of the groups, deals with this problem.

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INSTRUCTOR: What are your feelings on any given morning when you appear in your classrooms?

JIM: Well, I teach history, and the first thing that occurs to me is: Am I going to put this across to the children?

INSTRUCTOR: You're concerned, Jim, with what's happening to you, how successful you'll be in teaching history?

JIM: That's right. I think my job is to educate the children. That's my function. I think we covered that point before. We're in the classroom to help children change in directions which will result in desirable behavior. The skill of the teacher lies in knowing what is involved in bringing about that desirable behavior.

NANCY: I wonder how many of us know how to change ourselves so that we can grow in desirable directions?

INSTRUCTOR: Well, then, we can't very well do it for the children, can we? I suppose many of you are confused at this point.

NANCY: Indeed I am.

JIM: Sure, I'm all mixed up. I guess I don't know what the problem is. I've got to teach history and I don't know how to teach it so that the children will really learn some history.

JOHN: My greatest need in the classroom is to teach the boys to get something from the required reading.\*1

John and Jim are facing here a problem common to many teachers. How does the skilled teacher reconcile the need for pupil

The point of view presented in this chapter is supported by an extended study just completed at Ohio State University, conducted by Florence Greenhoe Robbins. See Selected Bibliography at the end of the chapter.

participation with her need for adhering to a rigid syllabus? There are two general approaches to resolving this problem. First, the teacher can take the class into her confidence, admit to the pupils that she does not share the administration's views on the curriculum but that the requirements simply must be met, no matter how distasteful the process. But this procedure has the serious disadvantage of putting the teacher in conspiracy with the pupils against the administration, of dividing the pupils' loyalties, and of breeding disrespect for the teacher on the part of the pupils.

The second method is more sound, pedagogically and psychologically. The teacher describes the requirement realistically, without expressing her own views on its desirability, and asks the pupils for suggestions about the ways in which they might go about meeting it. For example, if the class is required to study a Latin-American country, the teacher can ask the pupils to volunteer to prepare themselves on the aspect of the study—geographic, economic, literary, artistic—which lies closest to their individual interests.

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The attitude of the teacher determines the spirit of the class-room, the matrix in which learning can take place. But a permissive attitude does not imply irresponsible, anarchic, unstructured class-room procedure. No one, pupils or teacher, should behave arbitrarily. No one can or does live unto himself. We live in a realistic world of objects, places, time, and persons. There are limitations, and they have to be met and struggled with. By her attitude toward the learner, the teacher can help or hinder the struggle. Her acceptance of difference will encourage pupil participation.

We have tried to show the importance of the classroom atmosphere and the part the teacher plays in creating it. The classroom, however, does not exist by itself, nor does the teacher operate alone. There is a wider context which must be taken into account. School budgets may call for staff reductions and, therefore, larger numbers of pupils in each class. Often equipment and materials cannot be provided. Such factors can undermine the efforts of the teacher.

More important than the school budget, perhaps, are the attitudes of the school board, administrators, parents, and community leaders. Their attitudes are inevitably communicated to the rankand-file teacher and affect the teacher's spirit. The attitudes of the pupils depend, in part, on the spirit of the teacher, which, in turn, reflects the attitudes of her superiors and the community in which she lives.

A striking case in point is the upsetting fear which has currently taken hold of many teachers as a consequence of local, state, and national investigations of the loyalty of teachers. The merits or justification of the inquiries are not in issue. The attitudes of the school administrators and the investigating committees do have their effect upon the spirit of the classroom teacher and, hence, upon her classroom performance. In word, the teacher has the right to look for support to her superiors and to the community for the efforts she makes in creating the kind of classroom atmosphere which best encourages pupil growth.

## Problems for Discussion

- 1. How have you felt during the first half hour of one of your new classes conducted by a teacher whom you met for the first time? Try to explain the factors which account for your reactions.
- 2. If you were in charge of the class, what would you say as you met the pupils for the first time? As a student, what would you like the teacher to say?
- 3. If, as a teacher, you meet a class of forty fourth-grade pupils all of whom sit sweetly and quietly, what, if anything, is to be looked for?
- 4. If five of the children in a high-school freshman class were noisy and interfering with the group activity, what would you do?
- 5. Do you agree that no group of pupils in a classroom should be allowed complete "freedom"? Does this mean that the "permis-

sive" atmosphere should be limited? In what ways and in what circumstances? Are there different limits for different age levels? Do limits make for or interfere with psychological health?

- 6. Would you, as a teacher, "tolerate" a disrespectful attitude of a pupil?
- 7. Is a personal verbal attack on a pupil, in the presence of other pupils, ever justified? Would it not be justified, for example, to demonstrate to the class that the teacher must, in the final analysis, retain control over the class?
- 8. How does a teacher demonstrate or communicate genuine affection for the children in the classroom?
- 9. Is it desirable for the teacher to be consistent in her expectations of pupil conduct?
- 10. Are there times when classroom conduct standards should be modified? When?
- 11. Is a teacher fair if she treats every child alike, or should she take into account individual differences and needs of the pupils? If she follows the latter course, what happens to the charge of "favoritism" and "pets"? For example, should every child who pilfers candy from another child's desk be dealt with in the same way?
- 12. Do grades destroy daily pupil motivation? Do they limit the creation of a friendly classroom atmosphere? Do they threaten the social relationships of the pupils?

If all grades were eliminated, how would you evaluate the work of the pupils? Does evaluation imply some system of grading? How do you evaluate the performance of your parents or friends? Is such evaluation reliable?

## Selected Bibliography

<sup>1</sup> Robbins, Florence Greenhoe. "The Impact of Social Climates Upon a College Class," *The School Review*, June 1952. Dr. Robbins sums up the results of the study by observing that (1) a person's relation to the group and his status in it are the most important

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factors in his psychological and social security; (2) planning his own action determines to a great extent an individual's personal-social aspects of living. Benjamin Fine reported on this study in the New York Times, June 22, 1952. Similar studies testing the value of various classroom atmospheres have been conducted in school and college classes throughout the country. The general conclusions are the same.

Lewin, K., Lippitt, R., and White, R. K. "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created Social Climates," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1939. This classic study of Kurt Lewin and his associates was the first to be made. One of the more extended studies made recently is that conducted by the Village of Forest Hill Schools, Toronto, Canada, under the direction of D. M. Graham.

#### Chapter Five

# The Reality-centered School

The Cement of the Community

Preservation of Tradition

Respect for the Individual

The Reality-centered School

Changing Staff Relations

Problems for Discussion

HERE HAS BEEN a good deal of discussion about whether the American school should be subject-matter-centered or child-centered. The subject-matter-centered school, emphasizing prescribed courses, examinations, grades—all determined by school authorities—has been criticized as unrealistic because it ignores the "needs," interests, motives, and capacities of the students. On the other hand, if the child-centered school emphasizes all these things, it also is unrealistic in that it ignores the "needs," interests, and values of the community. The school is realistic if it strikes a balance between the "needs" of the child and the "needs" of the community. Such a school is reality-centered.

In this chapter we propose (1) to clarify the problem of the reality-centered school, (2) to illustrate how the teacher seeks to achieve a better balance between individual and social interests, and (3) to show the need for modifying staff relations in the school.

## The Cement of the Community

Orderly social life would be impossible if individuals were permitted to give full expression to their spontaneous needs and always follow their peculiar, individual interests. Social institutions provide much of the motivation and control of individual behavior by defining people's relationships. Through the family, school, church, and the social and occupational activities in which we engage, we learn what we ought to do and what we may not do. In given situations, boys are expected to act in one way and girls in another way. The husband assumes certain obligations and the wife others. An employee is entitled to certain privileges from his union, the foreman has certain rights in the company, and the executive expects to carry out the responsibilities of his office and to receive the accompanying rewards of management.<sup>1</sup>

The statuses which each of us acquires and the roles each of us plays depend upon our activities and associations. Each status and role has attached to it a certain kind of expected behavior on our part as well as a certain kind of expected response of others. Generally the status of motherhood carries with it responsibility for the physical care of infants. The mother performs her role (the dynamic aspect of status) in accordance with what her society expects. A father and husband is expected to provide the means of livelihood for his family. In so far as young married women are turning to employment in greater numbers than before, the traditional roles are being modified. New expectations are being formed. In every case, however, our relationships with one another are based upon more or less well-defined and expected behavior.

Social interaction, however, tends not only to direct our behavior in expected channels but also to redirect it into new paths. Our American society is characterized not by rigidity of social, economic, or religious classes but by a relatively high mobility. We can move from one status to another more easily than in perhaps any other country. A miner's son does not have to remain a mine worker. He can rise to national leadership in a labor union. A necktie salesman need not remain a clerk in a haberdashery but can become President of the United States. Our American values encourage the individual to better his lot, to move away from a given, or ascribed, status to a different, or achieved, status.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, our social system works in opposite directions. On the one hand, it defines the expected behavior of the status one has and, on the other, it encourages the individual to seek a new status with different expectations. A simple example is the position of the adolescent in our society. We tell him, at times, that he may not do certain things. He is not old enough to assume the responsibility. When he becomes a few years older, he will understand. In the next breath, we ask him why he behaves so childishly. He is no longer a youngster. He is old enough to know better. Just what is the status of the adolescent? We aren't sure, nor is he. Children are dissatisfied with what parents expect from them and parents are not satisfied with the behavior of children. The adolescent seeks to redefine his status in accord with the values of his peer group.

The pattern of adolescent development is, in broadest socio-

logical terms, the general pattern of American life. Our society wants to preserve its traditional institutions, which define given or ascribed statuses and roles, but at the same time it seeks to encourage individuals to achieve new roles. We want to preserve our traditions and we want to change them.

## Preservation of Tradition

The chief function of the school (and of the family) is to transmit the commonly accepted values to which we give allegiance. Thus we safeguard the institutional life of the community and guarantee an orderly existence. We acquire, and consent to abide by, the norms and expectations of our society. The school is one of the most important agencies which transmit the heritage of our past.

Most groups of professional educators in this country on all levels of general education support an irreducible minimum of curriculum content. Thus, they maintain, every child will have the opportunity to become comfortably aware of the kind of physical and natural world we inhabit. His increasing familiarity with social studies will enable him to recognize the contemporary institutional and social problems which beset us on all sides. He will be offered the opportunity to become acquainted with outstanding works of literature, art, and music. He will gain insight into the conflicting ideals and values of our civilization. Above all, he needs the sharp tools of critical analysis to distinguish fact from fancy, evidence from propaganda. In brief, the child will be helped to understand himself and his relation to others and to the complicated world in which we live. This requirement, the assimilation of our traditions and our institutional life, motivates and controls behavior and gives point to the schools' presenting social reality through subject matter.

Contemporary civilization, however, differs from every other culture in that many of us do not regard our tradition as absolute. We recognize that we possess certain traditions, those labeled "Western European," and that other peoples live according to

other values. We are the first culture to become anthropological-minded. Indeed, anthropology as a science is less than one hundred years old and is the product of Western Europeans. We are the first civilization to recognize that no tradition is sacred and that we decide what our tradition shall be or shall become. In a word, we also want to change or to modify our traditions. We support the idea of achieved status. Everyone is entitled to an equal opportunity for life, liberty, and the pursuit, if not the attainment, of happiness.

## Respect for the Individual

It is significant that the American concept of nationalism does not focus on "Empire," "the Fatherland" (das Vaterland), military heroes, or territory (La Patrie). Shortly after our Revolutionary War, we developed our ideal of the "Rights of Man."

But the "Rights of Man" is not merely a social-political doctrine. Psychiatric theory and clinical practice of the past thirty-five years have provided a core of fairly reliable data about "the needs" of individuals. These scientific observations seem to support basic American political and social ideals. For example, democratic parliamentary procedure, as well as structure, rests on conflict of interests. The executive has to share power with or have discretion limited by the legislature. The legislature, in turn, generally consists of two houses made up of differing parties. Difference of opinion is accepted, welcomed, and protected. Consensus is temporarily arrived at with all parties abiding by the rules. Subsequent dissatisfaction engendered by altered conditions results in new leaders and new laws.

Personality development follows a similar pattern. The individual blob of protoplasm becomes a unique organism which must learn to surrender "the pleasure principle" to "the reality principle." The developing infant soon internalizes the expectations of family and friends. He becomes socialized up to a point. He wants to belong and to feel secure but he also wants to express his personality, to be left alone to follow his unique bent, to develop his par-

ticular capacities, talents, and interests. He wants his own style of living, which must be qualified by his social experiences. He wants to, or he has to, submit to others. He asks or he struggles to be left alone. There are times when he must bend or break. The individual must learn to live with, and in, conflict.

The teacher who is aware of contemporary developments in mental hygiene, child growth, adolescent needs, and group dynamics\* recognizes this need for individualism. The early "progressive schools" (roughly 1910-1925) reacted against the rigidity of the subject-matter-oriented school, which sought to make stenciled stereotypes of the children. The children were to follow their interests, to determine their own projects. The schools wanted independent, creative spirits to supply the yeast of social change.

During the past twenty-five years, "the" progressive school movement has returned to an emphasis on required content, uniform standards, and an administration with greater responsibility in defining requirements of the school.

In recent years, the concept of the child-centered public school has appeared in print and, here and there, in practice. The pendulum is again starting its counterswing. Most educators today assert—verbally, at least—that the point of departure for genuine learning must be where the pupil is. Unless the "need satisfactions" of the students are met, genuine growth will not occur. Hence the vast amount of exploration on "life adjustment" courses, the concern about "the whole child."

The sympathetic understanding of individual needs is, indeed, one of the great contributions of psychiatry, mental hygiene, clinical psychology, and refined social case work and practice. Each child does possess unique qualities—individual talents, imagination, temperament, or emotional make-up, powers of observation, ability to abstract or synthesize. We may agree, furthermore, that all learning is, in the last analysis, a personal matter. The child, like everyone else, learns precisely what he wills to learn, no more and no less.

<sup>\*</sup>Group dynamics is the study of the processes of group operation. It is concerned with how groups discuss, reach decisions, and plan for and attain goals.

Motivation can be stimulated by the teacher but not simulated by the pupil. The child perceives what he wants to perceive, hears what he wants to hear, and rejects or distorts what seems threatening to his present organization. It does not follow, however, that the school should become child-centered.

## The Reality-centered School

The individual, as we have seen, must be inducted into his society—the family, the school, and, later, the broader social system. In order to participate successfully as a member of a community, however narrow or extended, the pupil must become sensitive to the expectations of others and to the significance of his status and roles as perceived by them. Associated living inevitably requires these kinds of reciprocal appreciations. Without commonly shared values, an individual is alienated or institutionalized.

An individual's "needs" involve not only his independent need for expression of a spontaneous "self" but also his social needs to share the values of others. Young children in public school are as yet not aware of many of their future social needs. For his own welfare, the child needs to be informed about many skills and subjects. The dilemma arises because what he will need is not what he feels he now needs. Since he learns only what and when he wants to learn, we seem to reach an impasse.

The situation is not hopeless, however, unless the teacher is unskilled. The problem is to create the kind of classroom atmosphere in which the pupil is helped to sense needs that are still inchoate. As these needs are felt and articulated by him, he becomes egoinvolved. He becomes willing, because unthreatened and unpressured, to assume more reponsibility and initiative for his own educational growth. Who of us doesn't enjoy the opportunity for expression of what interests us?

The teacher's greatest responsibility is to assume the role of skillful challenge (see Chap. 7), to evoke the latent social needs only dimly perceived by the child. The teacher assumes the role

of an alter ego, representing the social realities which the child senses but does not see. The child cannot assume full responsibility for his growth. Confusion must be narrowed, limits defined, and needs clarified. This can be attempted in specific settings, if the teacher is careful to remain close to where the child is, not too far ahead but far enough ahead to offer a challenge which is perceived as an opportunity rather than as a threat. The skills and sensitivities required in the profession of teaching are probably more delicate than in any other profession.

The following excerpts will illustrate some of the difficulties encountered and several procedures used in introducing social needs or requirements without being too far away from the needs of the learners.

The first example is taken from the fifth meeting of one of the seminar groups.

JIM: Is it part of good teaching for the teacher to ask the students what they have done in class in the past week? Isn't it better for the teacher to tell the students what took place so that they rekindle interest in what's taking place?

JOHN: Why, yes. That's excellent tactics. I think that's part of his skill; with interest you will go a lot farther.

NANCY: I don't think that's quite right. In the case you gave, you are telling the students what interested them. It seems to me you should try to find out what interests the students and then summarize the points which they have made.

ELIZABETH: Wouldn't it be much better if the students were asked to list the problems which interested them and then you talk about the data in light of the topics they presented? That, to me, seems to be skilled teaching.

JOHN: Well, the average boy has to have guidance. I've got to lead him.

ELIZABETH: That means you give him the leading question.

JOHN: That's right. The average kid doesn't know what he is looking for and I've got to interest him.

- taking a trip around A——. The first thing that we did was to study some maps, and then we saw a sound film of A—— in the class. Then we got on the bus and went to these points of interest. Then upon return to the classroom the children discussed what they had seen. That, I think, is a complete unit involving the study of A——.
- INSTRUCTOR: Let's try to generalize from this experience. I think we're talking about the problem of how to help to motivate students and arouse their interest in matters which we or the school thinks are important.
- ELIZABETH: What bothers me is the fact that originally I made the suggestion of taking a trip to visit some points of interest. And I'm wondering whether the kids really wanted that or whether I forced it on them and they turned around and said they were interested.
- BOB: Shouldn't the children have been left alone to decide whether or not they wanted to study A———? Or should it be the responsibility of the teacher to decide that question? Society—that is, the A——— Board of Education and the Curriculum Committee—have decided that children of A——— should know their city. Now, why should we specially try to get them to be interested, when it has already been decided that they need it?
- JIM: I agree with that. The children have to live in a realistic world. It would be desirable to have them become interested, but initially someone has to decide what the children are going to study. We are really in a conflict of philosophies of education.
- the teachers should be looked upon as research persons. They should know something about A——, and the children should look to them for guidance. The teacher doesn't have to direct every problem in studying A——, but he can indicate that they are going to study A—— and then have the children participate in deciding what aspects they want.

In this way you combine both what the Board of Education wants and the interests of the children. The leader should point the way, but the students should have a good part of the say in whether they think the way is a good one.

John and Elizabeth were trying to capture and make use of pupil interest in introducing required subject matter. Bob and Jim think that the teacher has first to present subject matter and point the direction of study. Lawrence supports the middle position. Isn't

the fact that interest was kindled more important than the question of who it was that struck the first light?

The same issue was dealt with by another group of teachers in a slightly different context. This discussion occurred during their tenth meeting.

HARRY: I should like to raise this question. I was graduated from a progressive teachers' college. I find myself teaching in a traditional setting. How can I gain sufficient confidence in myself to try and introduce my better insight although my school and community environment don't support what I believe? The methods I find being used are opposed to the methods I believe in. Now what does one do? I am referring primarily to fixed subject-matter content and pupil interest.

HILDA: Well, does anyone check on the textbooks or methods you use?

HARRY: No. [Silence]

INSTRUCTOR: The problem seems to be one of divided loyalty—loyalty to the school and loyalty to the pupils.

HARRY: Precisely.

NED: That's a terrible spot to be in. I know because I'm in it. On the one hand, you want the kids to pass the examination at the end of the year, and you feel the only way to accomplish that is to teach along the traditional methods. On the other hand, we know that the pupils really learn when they are making their own efforts and you help them. It gives one a feeling of insecurity. That I know.

coldly, but who get a chance to think things through, do better on the final examination than those who memorize.

HARRY: Yes, but how do you give them a chance to think things through? [A long silence]

subject-matter content, which deals with unrelated data from the point of view of the pupil, and the second area, in which the primary aim is to help the child grow? Suppose one accepts the text and the syllabus as given. Now, are there ways in which the teacher can approach the required syllabi or subject matters and still do a different kind of job?

JIM: There is a point in a child's knowing facts for an examination, if examinations are given, testing facts. But aren't we unfair to the pupil in not preparing him for life situations if we don't show him the relation of the facts, and have his interest awakened in what is being talked about?

NED: I think the answer to that is to teach the way you honestly feel. Of course, there may be some inconsistencies. For example, you may have to tell the children, "Look, we're going to have a test at the end of the year, and I suppose you'll just have to memorize the facts." I know that's not right. Yet, there are a great many facts that children must know.

INSTRUCTOR: Whether they are interested in the facts or not?

NED: We're back to where we started.

INSTRUCTOR: I suppose, Harry, this hasn't been very much help to you?

HARRY: No, it hasn't. I haven't really had my question answered.

NED: Well, maybe the reason is that nobody can answer it except yourself. There aren't any rules, and if there were, they wouldn't be of much help.

Harry raises a fundamental and troublesome question, the problem of "fixed subject-matter content and pupil interest." He believes in one approach and the school in another. "Now what does one do?" Ned and Jim restate the same problem. Lila seemed to be approaching a resolution of the dilemma when she indicated that pupils should be "given a chance to think things through." Harry persists in asking how that is done. A long silence follows. No one volunteers an elaboration of the point.

None of the members of this group seemed to realize—or if they did, no mention was made of the fact—that they themselves were being given the chance and were actually engaged in the process of thinking things through. Had the teacher "answered" by restating that this was one of the areas which revealed the skill of the teacher, his answer would have received intellectual confirmation but no real understanding. Instead he restated the problem and asked whether, given required subject matter, the teacher could not "still do a different kind of job."

The realities of the school curriculum and official requirements certainly have to be met. These are conditions over which the teacher has little control and limitations within which the teacher must operate. The important point is that the teacher who realizes this will be more likely to seek and discover ways of evoking pupil interest than the teacher who is unaware of the dilemma and simply accepts the situation as one in which she has no concern or responsibility. Her attitude is, "I'm supposed to teach x, so I'll teach x." The attitude of a teacher who realizes the problem is, "I'm supposed to teach x but the pupils aren't really involved. What can I do to help them sense and understand that they may find something of value to themselves in learning x?"

The question remains unanswered, although Ned indicates where an answer is to be found. "Nobody can answer it except yourself. There aren't any rules, and if there were, they wouldn't be of much help." Ned dimly realizes that each teacher must acquire for herself the skill required to deal with required subject matter and at the same time keep in mind the real interests of the pupils.

Many pupils will assume responsibility for their performance even in the initial absence of genuine, inherent interest in what is required. Initially, the pupil will assume responsibility if he likes and trusts the teacher, who, likewise, expresses confidence in the pupil and enlists his participation. Subsequently, as often happens, the pupil becomes genuinely interested in the data or requirement in its own right.

The members of the group, during one of the early meetings, were discussing the fact that certain written materials were required. The teacher wondered how they felt about this requirement. His own judgment, based upon long experience, was that the discipline involved in writing statements challenges one to the kind of effort which is easy to avoid in more casual and less precise oral discussion. The written statement, of course, must be the creative expression of the writer, not a regurgitation of the usual, meaningless fol-de-rol. The problem for the teacher is to communicate to the pupils that they are free to be themselves. The writing is to be their reaction to the material or topic.

Any teacher who has "tried to tell" pupils about the value of discipline or the satisfaction involved in creative writing realizes how fruitless the effort usually is. The pupils have been through the tiresome treadmill of written assignments for the teacher—the book reviews, the outlines of the assigned chapter, the essays on teacher-assigned topics, or "twenty sentences not more than fifteen words in length," etc., etc. Then the papers are returned with the red-lettered reward or punishment, plus self-righteous pontification. Add to this the comments of parents when the pupils bring home their offerings, and one easily understands why pupils do not know how to accept or relate to the opportunity of genuine expression in writing when it is offered to them. Their skepticism, if not distrust, is to be expected. Thus it is not surprising that something like this occurs even on a graduate level where practicing teachers are working for advanced degrees.

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INSTRUCTOR: I think it would be highly desirable to present written statements of your own evaluation of our discussions from time to time as we decide. [A chorus of "No's" and "Aw's"] I gather there is considerable objection. Let's discuss how you feel about this.

JIM: How many papers will you want?

INSTRUCTOR: Jim, what makes you think I want the papers?

JIM: Well, you say you want them.

INSTRUCTOR: I thought I said it would be desirable "to present" them. For myself, I'd much rather not devote the time to reading more papers, but I do feel that all of you will be helped by stating in written form what you consider important, and I'll be glad to give them careful attention.

JOHN: How many papers will we have to do?

INSTRUCTOR: John, would you like to gain as much as you can out of our meetings?

JOHN: Of course.

INSTRUCTOR: If you were sure, as you're not, that writing would help, would you willingly undertake the responsibility?

JOHN: I guess so.

INSTRUCTOR: But you're not convinced, and unless you are, the papers are not likely to be worth while. These papers are not to be the kind you ordinarily have done in your school work. My own opinions or reflections are relatively unimportant. Each of you, may I emphasize, simply and briefly, is free to put into these papers exactly what you think and how you feel. That is the important thing.

STELLA: How long must they be?

INSTRUCTOR: I don't see how I can answer that since I'll not be writing them. Some of you may want to write ten words and some ten hundred words. I guess it depends upon what the writer wants to say. [Silence] Would all of you be more comfortable if we agreed to re-examine the question of the papers, say three weeks from now? Give yourselves a chance and see what they do for you. If you decide against continuing

with written work, that will be quite acceptable. In the mean-time let's try it.

The group continued to discuss the content of the papers and the dates they were to be handed in.

If the reader concludes that the teacher was, in effect, requiring written work he is correct. The requirement was not presented, however, as an authoritative, rigid, unalterable one regarding which the students had nothing whatsoever to say. It was presented as a tentative requirement subject to examination and possible revision by the group. Generally, students will comfortably, even if not convincedly, accept such requirement. The spirit in which requirements are presented and discussed and the existing interpersonal relations between teacher and students determine whether requirements are felt as a threat, a duty, or a challenge. If the teacher genuinely offers the pupils some part in determining the character and structure of the requirement, the pupils are not likely to interpret the offer as mere "sugar-coating" of the same old requirements.

The following comment appeared on a paper five weeks later.

Writing papers now seems so effortless, that is, in the sense of not guessing what you want. I didn't feel that you were entirely permissive about our papers, but "the way" in which you offered your "demand" made me realize that both leader and group are confronted with the problem of limitations. If these limitations or requirements are presented with an attitude of personal responsibility, in an atmosphere of freedom in class, most students should feel challenged, not squelched under the proverbial thumb of the teacher—at least, that was the case with me.

At the beginning of our meetings, I was so terribly pressed for time that I felt resentment over the requirement of papers. I am glad now. I realize so much more the necessity of assigned readings and papers. It helps focus thinking and class discussion. In the assignments, I have to wrangle through to understanding or, at least, I'm brought up short in recognizing problems. Then,

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when I reread the assignments, they're more than a lot of words. The meanings are clearer because I have had to do something to the ideas.

I think Rogers' reference\* misinterprets your purpose. It is not a "demand" of yours but a requirement of the course, a limitation.

Any kind of realistic freedom requires organization, structure, and limitations; otherwise it becomes amorphous, limitless, and chaotic. A reality-centered classroom is no exception. Limits must be present, but within the limits there is room for flexibility. When, where, and how to introduce modifications depends upon the sensitivity and talent of the teacher and upon the group relationships. Her discretion will be increased if she is aware of the problem of balancing the interests of students with the *external* requirements of the class, be they facts, community needs, or administrative regulations.

#### Changing Staff Relations

The dilemma of bringing together social needs and pupil interest not only presents psychological problems and demands high skill on the part of the teacher but also calls for modification of school goals and for curriculum change. The group members were involved in this problem during the eleventh session.

NANCY: I try to do a certain kind of job with the children, but I am controlled by a work sheet. And every day I am afraid of the principal coming into the room and saying that I am not

\*In Client-centered Therapy (Houghton Mifflin, 1951), pp. 396-397, Carl Rogers states, ". . . within a very broad range of psychological structuring, a permissive climate may be built. Thus Cantor seems to be more comfortable in demanding that his classes read a prescribed assignment each week. While this may not aid in creating a suitable climate, it is not a barrier to it, as his verbatim excerpts indicate."

following the work sheet. But I have it ready in the event that he does come in, even though I don't use it.

MABEL: How can a teacher work comfortably being split that way?

NANCY: Well, I don't know. I'm waiting for the axe to fall one of these days.

INSTRUCTOR: It's a real problem. How do you people deal with it?

DAVE: I would say to my principal that this is the way I think I ought to do it, and I think I would do it that way.

NANCY: Well, my principal would answer, "No," flatly, if I should say a thing like that to him. It seems to me I might go to my supervisor and try and tell her simply and directly what I have in mind and then ask her to comment on what I was doing and see if she wouldn't cooperate with me in my new effort.

BERT: I think you have to fight the situation by talking with the supervisor, or accept it, or get out. I don't see any other way.

NANCY: When you say "fight the situation," what do you mean?

BERT: Well, I mean I want to do something about it. I don't want to fight against the supervisor. I should like to explain to her what I had in mind and hope that she would agree with me.

NANCY: Well, how do you do it?

BERT: My job was to try and do what I wanted to do without feeling I was creating a threat for the principal or for the supervisor.

INSTRUCTOR: How do some of the others deal with the situation?

GARL: Well, I tried this one. We had an assembly and I brought into the assembly some of the products my kids made in the Workshop. They made some nice things and presented them to the faculty—that is, the principal and the supervisor—during the assembly.

NANCY: Are you suggesting that we use bribery as a form of getting cooperation from our principals?

INSTRUCTOR: Could we, perhaps, find a more professional means for dealing with these split loyalties?

STANLEY: Well, this is the way I do it. I have to give certain reports on the work in my classes and in my department. And

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I know that my principal uses my report for his own when he reports to the Board of Education. And that is the way I enlist his cooperation to let me go along in my own way. It seems to me that what I am doing is permitting him to take the lead even though it's my work.

INSTRUCTOR: Do any of you think it would be much more professional if the supervisor and principal were helped to understand what you were trying to do rather than your using "politics" or bribery to enlist their support?

MURIEL: We try a petition sometimes.

MABEL: Oh, the petitions get you into trouble. It's held against you.

BERT: Well, doesn't it depend upon the situation and the principal? For example, in our school the principal very often has lunch with us, and during lunch we informally bring up the idea that a certain school has done something and we thought that we'd like to do it here and what did he think? And, as likely as not, he will tell us to go ahead and try it.

MABEL: Not in our school. Any petition-starters in our school have that held against them as long as they're in that school. Everybody is afraid to sign petitions.

INSTRUCTOR: Perhaps what is needed in every school is machinery set up to permit better communication between teachers, supervisors, and principals?

MABEL: Yes, it will be set up in the books, but the way it is actually carried out will be the same old story.

INSTRUCTOR: Wouldn't it be more likely that if machinery were set up communication would take place, although, I think, we

\*Note in the foregoing excerpt the transition from the problem of restructuring school procedures to the problem of human relations between various staff levels. The instructor felt the importance of discussing human relations but did not want to introduce that problem until the group members were able to sense its importance in curriculum change. They did, and the rest of this meeting was devoted to a discussion of staff relations.

The question may be raised as to why the instructor showed no such restraint in discussing the assignment of papers. In this case the instructor

all agree that, in the last analysis, it depends upon who the people are who are trying to communicate with one another.\*

The foregoing comments reveal some of the frustrations experienced by teachers who realize that more attention should be given to pupil interest and motivation. They want to help the pupils to learn, not merely to "teach" them subjects.

Staff relations and the orthodox attitudes of superiors block their efforts. The teachers who realize how difficult it is to change their own adult patterns can, perhaps, also become somewhat more understanding of their superiors. Is the fact that change is slow and difficult justification for abandoning attempts to change?

We have said that social realities, and an understanding of the world and the people in it, require pupils to assimilate subject matter. Subject matter, it should be emphasized, is not necessarily limited to book or speeches or fixed courses. All pupils need subject matter, but we have hardly begun to use our imagination to devise media for helping them to obtain it. For example, the uses of television which can be made, and probably will be made, to interest the pupils in subject matter—if not directly to teach them—stagger the imagination.

New media for presenting data are no substitute, however, for the discipline of persistent, diligent effort on the part of children. Once the pupil, through sympathetic encouragement by his

introduced the subject. If he had felt that during that evening, or one or two meetings later on, the group members would have made some suggestions about written work, he would not have introduced the matter. His experience led him to believe, however, that the average group of students will try to avoid written work as traditionally assigned. Aware of this, he deliberately introduced the question, then tried to help the students look at their responsibility in a different light. With regard to the issue of human relations, the experience of the instructor is that sooner or later a group such as this one would reach the point where the issue would arise.

These two illustrations show how each teacher must determine for himself when and how to deal with requirements. Sometimes the leader must introduce a "reality" situation when the students are not quite prepared for it; at other times, the teacher waits patiently for an opening made by the class.

teacher, feels and recognizes new interests and needs and is helped by the alert teacher to clarify them, he will want, for his own satisfactions, to learn more and explore further. This is self-discipline (the only genuine discipline there is), which is a better guarantee for study and growth than mid-semester warnings or sermons.

A schoolroom functions properly, freely, when it is organized in a way which meets the complicated needs of the human organism. The classroom is not, on the one hand, a clinic for individual or group therapy or, on the other, a factory to produce examination papers and grades.\* The school is a cross section of selected aspects of society where small groups of people with different powers, roles, and statuses are working together and learning how to relate to one another successfully. The classroom is a social system. A social system requires an understanding of the social needs and expectations inherent in specific situations. This understanding is gradually acquired and the expectations redefined as a result of the kind of interactions in the classroom.

The dichotomy between subject-matter-centered versus child-centered schools is an unreal one. The genuine problem is one of helping the student to discover that his needs are not completely satisfied by his anarchic individuality, that he has his being in group life, that others will make demands upon him as he will expect to make demands upon others, that it will be necessary for him to understand many things, and that this requires effort, skill, respect, humility, wonder, and knowledge. The social world is in the classroom. The understanding teacher, mindful of the differences among pupils, helps them to discover its nature and, hence, to rediscover their own. The acquisition of skill in balancing individual and social interests is more likely if teachers become alerted to the problem.

One final excerpt from the second, voluntarily submitted paper of a student will, perhaps, serve as an illustration of how the teacher balances an external requirement and individual student need. It is our belief that all members of a class should add to the productivity

<sup>\*</sup> Although the classroom teacher is not practicing psychotherapy, she might profitably avail herself of the opportunity to participate in group therapy competently administered under school auspices for the benefit of teachers. Only too few schools provide this at present.

of the group. That is the responsibility of each member of the group, whether he is willing to reognize it or not. We consider this to be an educational requirement. On the other hand, no student should be "forced" to participate before he is ready.

During the first three meetings of one of the seminar groups, only one member had made no contribution whatever. Near the close of the third meeting, the instructor, casually glancing at the student, C., remarked to the class, "Do all of you agree that each of us has the responsibility of helping each other to explore our several points of view?"

The following day we received a paper from C. This paper was discussed, with C.'s permission, the following week. A few days later we received a second paper, which read in part as follows:

I could see I wasn't going to get any help from the group or you and decided I should do something to gain recognition and to be given an opportunity to speak; to hear my own voice, to be allowed to make mistakes and to become aware of how much pressure the group would put on me.

In the beginning, when asked why I wrote my paper, I said, "I was confused about a lot of things that had come up in class and so I wrote about them. I don't know why I sent them to Dr. Cantor." This was a half truth, for as I wrote I did have some idea of why I was writing to him. I had realized he would have enough insight to use this to my advantage. I guess I refused to admit this before the group because I felt it was a childish thing. I could hardly guess exactly how he would use my paper but I think I understand it now. It wasn't difficult for the leader to "create this situation" in the discussion to correct my behavior, because the group was to discuss interpersonal relations that day, and my problem was just that. I felt uncomfortable reading it and having it discussed because I sensed that some members seemed to think this was an imposition on them and it had nothing to do with what they wanted to discuss that day.

When J—— said, "She seems to be dependent upon the leader," I disagreed because I didn't realize I was. But it is all very clear now, and this dependency is implied throughout my first paper. My training at State Teachers, which most generally emphasized the responsibilities of the teacher or leader rather

than of the pupils, led me to believe, for some strange reason, that I had a "right" to wait for encouragement from the leader. I can see the fallacy in this now, and I can see that there is more value in letting individuals realize and assume their own responsibilities. Furthermore, we need to develop this initiative if we want to make a better democratic society.

The leader said, "When people remain silent, isn't it because they don't want to assume their responsibility?" I said, "Not necessarily," thinking that he was referring to other responsibilities (after one had talked). I thought, "Some people want to assume responsibilities but are not able to exert themselves without encouragement." But I realize now that individuals must assume every responsibility, including the initial one, to speak up, for they have the capacity to do so and "are not able" is merely an excuse." <sup>3</sup>

## Problems for Discussion

- 1. If teachers really were serious about the American educational ideal of developing the latent possibilities of the individual child, what kind of adult would be developed?
- 2. Do the American primary and secondary schools now develop an adult population who think and act as independent adults?
- 3. How can the schools plan to develop individual talents and interests and at the same time maintain common values and standard goals and achievements? Can you resolve this dilemma?
- 4. Should pupils have a share in planning what they are to do? In what grades, to what degree, and regarding what subject matter?
- 5. Should pupils be charged with the responsibility for their work or be invited to determine and accept their responsibility? Suppose the pupils agree to accept responsibility but fail to discharge it. What does the teacher do?
- 6. Is the imposition of unpleasant consequences for pupil failure psychologically desirable for the pupil? Would the answer differ for different age levels?

- 7. What are some common values which all pupils want?
- 8. What are some of the values which distinguish one pupil from all other pupils?

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<sup>2</sup> Linton, Ralph. The Study of Man. New York: Appleton-Century, 1936. Chapter VIII of this volume, "Status and Role," clearly presents the meaning of the two terms so widely used in current literature. This volume will provide beginners with an introduction to many important anthropological concepts.

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1939, pp. 1-15. Emphasis is placed upon the way in which authority is administered and limitations or deprivations are set up. The child must emotionally accept the need for frustration and repression. Thus he is helped to face reality. (This essay is reprinted in Frank's Society as the Patient, Rutgers University Press, 1948, pp. 239-252).

## Chapter Six

## Function and Focus

The Focus of the Teacher

The Function of the Teacher

Problems for Discussion

N THE PRECEDING CHAPTER we saw that the school must be reality-centered, not subject-matter- or pupil-centered. Pupils and teachers live in a society which limits their activities and demands continuous adjustments to problems. The end product of education is a mature, sensitive, informed, and cooperative individual who can continue to learn, to change, and to develop as he encounters and assimilates limitations.

The teacher's function is to create the most favorable conditions for the teaching ⇔learning process. Although, in the last analysis, the pupils must learn in their own ways, the teacher cannot escape the professional responsibility of guiding the process within limits which control her, just as pupils must learn within limits over which they have no control.

The function of the teacher is to help the pupils face problems and reach decisions. Which problems? Any problem which relates to the responsibilities entrusted to her by the school administration is relevant. A geometry teacher does not, ordinarily, act as a school nurse. An arts and crafts teacher is usually not competent to act as a social-science instructor. The school nurse is not responsible for English literature. The English teacher cannot undertake a case worker's function. In a "core curriculum" or in a nursery school or in the very early grades, the teacher's obligations may involve several functions. These teachers, therefore, are professionally responsible for more than one activity.

The point is that the teacher must have delegated tasks which define the limits of her operation. She has to be anchored somewhere to protect her against the limitless demands of pupils and, at the same time, to safeguard the pupils. Otherwise, the pupils would be confused, not realizing what is expected, what their part in the teaching \in learning process is. The teaching \in learning process must be structured so that the confusion is narrowed and the respective obligations and responsibilities of teacher and pupils are understood.

The teacher is the professional person representing the school,

which offers a specific service through the teacher. The teacher does not carry all of the responsibility for what happens in her class, nor does she permit the pupils to carry the entire responsibility. The teacher's job is to perform professionally in her role. Her concern should be with the movement and direction of the class as it deals with the specific service she offers.

The teacher structures the classroom activity. She helps the pupils to clarify what they think they want and discuss what the school thinks she should offer and what, together, they might accomplish in that area. Suppose some of the pupils indicate they don't want any part of her offer or any part of the school? They want nothing, they assert.

A professional teacher can certainly understand this reaction and accept it, sometimes even sympathize with it. The teacher who has thought through and accepted the functional approach presented here is not disturbed by this kind of response. She simply makes clear that for a definite period of time they will all be together. Her job is to help them in a certain area, and their responsibility is to use that help to accomplish the purpose or purposes which bring them together. There is little any of them can do about changing the requirements they have to meet or the situation they are in. She will try to do her job well and wonders what, if anything, the pupils will do about their part. That, of course, is up to them.

The foregoing situation has been somewhat exaggerated in order to clarify the meaning of structure and function. The teacher has the responsibility to make clear, in the beginning, the purpose which brings all of them together, to inquire patiently about the kind of help the pupils think they want for the attainment of the purpose. None of this exploration should be mechanically and rigidly controlled. There can be wide latitude in exploration, modification, and redirection, so long as all of this occurs within the limits which structure the specific class. In brief, the pupils' wishes and suggestions and needs as they express them should certainly be genuinely considered so long as they do not call for the kind of help or service the teacher is not authorized to give. On the other

hand, the teacher must indicate what her responsibilities are. Between these two limits—namely, the pupils' wishes and needs in the specific area and the teacher's service—movement and growth can occur.

What takes place between teacher and pupil provides the dynamic conditions which can be used by the pupil in his own way. Learning which is significant in the life of the student takes place when the help offered by the teacher, elucidating the meanings of the data, is accepted by the student as an aid toward making the meanings his own.

Let us try to make clear the meanings and implications of the "limited functions" of the teacher. We start by relating an experience in which we participated.

A meeting of the parents and teacher of the sixth-grade pupils was arranged to discuss the work of the children. The teacher described the progress of the children in arithmetic and indicated some of the difficulties. There was some discussion. The teacher inquired whether any of the parents had any further questions. There were none. She then proceeded to tell the parents that they were not providing their children with proper lunches. She had observed that there was too much bread and not enough fruit or vegetables. Did anyone have any comments?

A mother of one of the pupils was restrained by her husband from asking the arithmetic teacher whether in her judgment there was enough starch in the pupils' blouses. The parents, as a group, expressed indignation after the meeting adjourned. Who was she to tell them how to feed their children? Someone suggested to the irate parents that her criticism may have been prompted by her interest in the development of the whole child. "Next thing," remarked a parent, "she will be ready to practice medicine for our children!"

One can view this incident sympathetically and conclude that the teacher was sincerely interested in the physical welfare of her pupils. The question is, however, whether it was her business, her province or function, to raise the question of pupil diet.

# The Focus of the Teacher

Before discussing the question of the teacher's focus (which will be answered by the following excerpts), let us present the substance of an exciting discussion carried on by one of the teacher groups which involves a similar point.

MABEL: I have a little girl in my class who is sexually fully developed. I noticed that all through the hour, while we read our English assignment, she was reading a magazine slipped in behind her reader. I watched for an opportunity and discovered that she was interested in certain diagrams involving the sexual organs of both male and female. I spoke to her, knowing that she was not doing satisfactory work either in my class or in other classes. I asked her if I couldn't help her in understanding some of that material. She seemed very frightened and said, "Please don't tell my Mummy about this." I said, "What seems to be the trouble, dear?" She said, "My Mummy would break my neck if she knew I was reading this stuff. She's hollered at me and she said she'd punish me if she ever caught me reading it. Please, please, don't tell her." The child was ten years old. She would talk to children about friends in her neighborhood who were coming home with babies. That's the one thing she seemed to be interested in. She was a terribly, terribly disturbed child. I knew there was a problem that needed attention. I went to the supervisor and asked her what was I to do. The supervisor didn't seem to be interested. She said, "I don't think we ought to get into this. This is not a matter for the classroom." So I said, "Well, it certainly is a matter for someone." And she said, "Well, if you want to, go see the principal." The next day I went to see the principal and I told him about the fact that this little girl

needed attention, and that I would like to go with her to her mother. The principal replied to me, "We don't want any more neighborhood troubles and complaining parents on our hands. You had better let the whole thing alone." Well, I feel very guilty about this. I feel something should be done. I can just see this little girl failing her classes and becoming neurotic and I don't think she ought to be left alone. Somebody has got to give her help. It's gotten so that I no longer enjoy my dinner and I can't sleep nights because I worry about this kid. I simply don't know what to do.

INSTRUCTOR: Mabel, what is the issue in this story, from the point of view of your function and responsibility as an English teacher?

MABEL: I want to know what my job is in regard to that child. She's getting very peculiar and perverted notions about sex and it's interfering with her feeling and her thinking and her classroom work. She needs help. Now, how can I give her help?

Mabel, a sympathetic and sincere teacher, wants to help the child and feels frustrated and guilty because she cannot. The instructor tried to help her come to grips with the problem by asking her what her function is as an English teacher. Mabel does not answer the question because she does not, as yet, understand it. Instead she replies, "I want to know what my job is in regard to that child. . . . She needs help. Now, how can I give her help?" The answer is that she can help the child only by focusing on the areas for which she is responsible—namely, teaching English—and in special problems referring the child to other school resources, if available, for help.

Neither Mabel nor the other students would, at this point, understand the answer if it were given. In the following discussion, the teacher, carrying out his responsibility, focuses on this one issue, Mabel's limited responsibility as a teacher of English. The teacher keeps this issue central and guides the discussion accordingly.

HARRY: It seems to me that you should be interested in the whole child and deal with the whole situation smoothly and not bring in outside complaints. Why don't you go and talk to the mother about these matters?

MABEL: The mother will not talk to anybody. The school called her once and she refused to come to the school, and she refuses to see anybody.

HARRY: I think it would be wrong for you to refer this child to a guidance bureau. She wanted to talk with you about it and you have her confidence, and I think it's your job to help the child.

MABEL: But how?

HARRY: Is the mother a problem, too?

MABEL: I'm sure she is.

INSTRUCTOR: Is that properly a problem for the Children's Guidance Bureau of the city? Or do you feel, Mabel, that you are competent to do a case-work job with that mother?

MABEL: Of course not.

HARRY: But this is Mabel's responsibility. She is the only one the child will relate to.

INSTRUCTOR: Mabel says she would not know how to deal with the mother and the mother must be dealt with to help that child. What is Mabel's next step?

HARRY: It seems to me someone in her own school set-up must share that problem with her. I guess it's not only Mabel's problem.

Visor, the supervisor said the mother is a stumbling block and we can't do anything about it. Then Mabel tells us she went to the principal and the principal doesn't want to make the next move. Now what does Mabel do? Is she professionally competent to deal with this kind of a case? She has failed to enlist the aid of her own superiors; they do nothing. Now what is Mabel's responsibility? Is Mabel justified in refusing to accept the responsibility because of her unpreparedness to do that kind of work?

HARRY: What about the child?

HELEN: I think the child is just unfortunate. There is nothing Mabel can do about it.

INSTRUCTOR: I see most of you do not like my question and Helen's answer, and I can understand your feeling. Now would you please tell me what other answer you can give? Suppose the child had a bad cold and no physician wanted to take the case and the school authorities, for whatever reason, did not want to report it. What would Mabel's obligation be?

JOHN: Mabel's job is to report that case to the school nurse, or to the principal, and the principal would be the one to refer the

child to proper medical attention.

INSTRUCTOR: And if the principal or nurse, for whatever reason, does not report it, now what does Mabel do?

HARRY: I guess she can't do anything.

INSTRUCTOR: Mabel, do you feel you have the right, professionally, to go beyond your superiors?

MABEL: Definitely no.

INSTRUCTOR: Now, your superiors do nothing about it. What's your position?

MABEL: I guess I can't do anything about it—though I must confess I feel guilty about it. I've still got to meet that child every day, and her problem is there with me in the classroom.

HARRY: You can by-pass your principal. It might mean, of course, that you'll lose your job, but you can do it. You can go to a social agency and tell them about the case.

INSTRUCTOR: Then Mabel may properly be suspended for insubordination?

HARRY: What comes first, Mabel's job or the welfare of the child? I think Mabel's duty as a teacher comes first.

INSTRUCTOR: I thought we had said that her duty as a teacher was fulfilled by her reporting this to her superiors. Maybe you mean, Harry, her duty as a citizen, not as a teacher?

NED: There is more than duty involved here. There is fellow sympathy, regard for a child, and I think that Mabel as one human being relating to another should do something for that child.

INSTRUCTOR: You mean not as a teacher, but as a human being?

HARRY: I think a teacher could use a great deal of ingenuity in finding ways of showing the child her affection and interest and giving her some help in that way and doing that as a teacher.

NED: I'd like to say that this situation, not just this particular situation, but situations like it, arise many, many times in our school. We find ourselves in conflict between our jobs as teachers and our feelings as human beings.

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Harry and Mabel still feel that the teacher has the obligation to help. Harry thinks it is "Mabel's duty as a teacher" to help, even if it means the loss of her job for insubordination. The incongruity of losing one's job for performing one's duty doesn't occur to Harry. His question, "What comes first, Mabel's job or the welfare of the child?" reveals how far away he is (as are many other teachers) from distinguishing one's professional function from responsibility for the over-all "welfare" of a child.

Ned is close to the distinction when he states, "We find ourselves in conflict between our jobs as teachers and our feelings as human beings."

INSTRUCTOR: Suppose Mabel or any one of you had to deal not with this one case but with a dozen such cases each week. Would you soon stop being a classroom teacher and become a social worker or psychiatric interviewer? This child is very much disturbed emotionally. Now, what is the function of the teacher?

MABEL: I'm not a therapist; I tried to do the best I could to refer it to the proper authorities, and there is nothing more I can do.

HARRY: I can see that you take on so many different kinds of activity that you become frustrated and cease to do a job in the classroom and are torn in a thousand different directions.

Mabel and Harry have reached the point where an explanation of the teacher's function will clarify what they are now feeling.

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INSTRUCTOR: The issue is what are the limits of Mabel's job? It is difficult for the average teacher to see that she must operate within the limits of her professional capacities and function. If you do, you are protected against that which you may not do, either because of your responsibility as a teacher or because of your lack of competence. Isn't the problem one of the teacher's protecting herself against feeling guilty by understanding her function and not being disturbed by the fact that she cannot do what her function doesn't call for? Isn't she protected by operating within her limits?

MABEL: I must add here that certainly after this discussion I don't feel quite so guilty as I formerly felt. I can't tell you how relieved I am.

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder if some of you, for the first time, aren't becoming aware of a concept of the limits of the teacher, and whether you don't see how helpful an awareness of limits is. You can see that this concept of the whole child has not been too carefully examined, as it is usually expressed. You can see, can you not, that no teacher can be directly responsible for the whole child. Your responsibility is met by doing the limited job you are competent to perform. Now, when you have done that, maybe the child will do something, with the help you offered him, in other areas of his experience.

NED: As a matter of fact, there is a law which states that if a teacher, for example, removes a sliver from a child's hand and an infection sets in, the school authority will not protect the teacher against a suit.

INSTRUCTOR: The legal reason for that, may I add, supports our analysis of limited function. The teacher, in helping the child with the sliver, is acting in his capacity as a private citizen, not

as a teacher. He is acting outside his official function as a teacher and may be liable in a negligence suit.

HARRY: When I say we are to consider the whole child, that involves the cooperation of parents, school authorities, physicians, and community agencies. The teacher alone is not responsible for the whole child but it means all community agencies, school and otherwise.

MABEL: I think the teacher has to know enough about the community resources to know when to make a referral, where to make it, and to whom to make it. And if she does that, I think she has fulfilled her obligation toward the child as a teacher of a particular class.

should send their children to psychiatrists. I had a child who did nothing whatsoever in a class for several months. I got no response out of him. I went to the principal; the principal said he would call in the mother. He did, and after many meetings with this mother, the principal finally convinced the mother she ought to see a psychiatrist. The mother did go to the psychiatrist for a while and then dropped out. Now I don't think it would be my job to have sent that mother to a psychiatrist for treatment. We did discover from the psychiatrist that the mother and father were the problem, and not the boy. I could no more tell that mother to go to a psychiatrist than I had the right to tell her how much time she ought to permit her child to see television. That is not my job.

NED: In the case of both Cora and Mabel, I'm sure that neither one of them would completely forget the child even though their hands were tied. I'm sure both of them, understanding the cases, would try and gear their own teaching methods, as well as what they would require of the children, in light of what is understood about the problems of the cases. To that extent, then, both Cora and Mabel as the teacher would be able, within very small areas, to help the child.

cora: You've got to maintain your own ability and sense as a

teacher in the classroom. You cannot be torn apart by dealing with problems over which you have no control.

Ned, Harry, and Mabel proceeded to develop their new insight about the limited function of the teacher. Cora's statements, too, showed that she now insists on the need for carrying out limited responsibilities.

INSTRUCTOR: A neuro-surgeon who worried about every patient that he lost—and the mortality rate is high in neuro-surgery—would be unfit and unable to perform operations on the next patient. If he loses his patient, he still goes home. He feels bad about losing a patient, but he plays bridge in the evening, goes to bed early, and gets ready for the next operation in the morning. If he continues worrying, feeling guilty and upset, I don't suppose he'd make a very good surgeon.

MABEL: If he used all the resources which he had, then I guess he wouldn't have to worry too much as a professional doctor.

INSTRUCTOR: By way of summary, may we say that each of us has to be satisfied with partial success operating within very definite limits which we recognize. The limits protect us against being torn apart, and they protect our pupils against our incompetence in those areas for which we have had no preparation. Each teacher must be made aware of her particular function in her particular classroom and in the particular school, of the community resources, of the machinery for processing certain cases which she can't handle, and of certain situations which she can't deal with. Now, the teacher who is aware of those limitations becomes a better professional.

HARRY: May I go back to Mabel's case? I couldn't go into a classroom watching that kid and knowing that my superior, the principal, has failed in his obligation. I just couldn't take it. Something would have to be done about it in my situation.

I have a question of economic security; I've got to worry about my wife and children; I don't want to lose my job. But I can't work in a job feeling that my superiors have neglected their responsibilities. Now I have to face this question. Is economic security the only thing in life, or is my obligation to that child, my sense of duty, equally important? I've asked myself that question on numerous occasions when similar problems have arisen. It's more than one job I neglect because of that dilemma. Maybe I'm oversensitive, but I face that almost every week and I'd like to know how to answer it. A person has to live with himself as well as making a living for his family. I think I would go outside that school situation to help that child, and risk all the responsibilities of insubordination.

INSTRUCTOR: Harry, you said something about being overly sensitive and not being able to abide with these limits. Maybe there is something in us which leads us to want to play God and do the whole job, which keeps us from doing this limited skilled function. Perhaps it's our need which drives us to attend to the whole child? In other words, it's not the whole child we're really interested in so much as we are interested in working out our own need to be right and our inability to live in peace if we succeed only partially in whatever we are doing. Our apparent solicitude for these children is perhaps compensatory for our own needs.

All of the classes I have taken at college have impressed upon us, as teachers, the need for getting satisfaction out of this, the need for getting satisfaction out of that, of doing all kinds of things, and we all do want to do a good job. We leave feeling that we have to do everything, and I can see now that that need lies behind my previous unwillingness to accept the need for limits. I can see that so clearly now. I think our training is in part responsible for our wanting to play God.

INSTRUCTOR: It is much more difficult, isn't it, to try to do limited things well than to pretend to do everything and do it poorly? We get frustrated because we can't do everything, and then

we use these frustrations as an excuse for not performing well. On the other hand, if you try to do a limited job, you gain in skill and in responsibility, and you become much harder on yourself professionally.

Mabel feels guilty initially about what she feels is her lack of responsibility for the child. At the same time, she is aware that there is nothing she can do about the girl if her superiors object. She feels unhappy and frustrated.

Harry at first is convinced that superiors should be by-passed even if it means the teacher's job. The "duty" of a teacher comes first, he feels, and her duty—that is, her function—is to help the child in an over-all direction.

Ned feels as Harry does. He states that there is a conflict between the teacher's function and the private citizen's feelings.

Mabel, Harry, and Ned are helped, through Cora and the instructor, to review their respective attitudes and feelings in the context of the limited function of the teacher. By being helped to understand the need for, and the protection of, focusing on their respective limited job, each becomes more comfortable. The inevitable need to work within assigned limits to attain skilled performance by doing a partial job efficiently and effectively is recognized and really accepted.

A further problem is implied—that of communicating through committees or faculty the need for additional or different resources in the school or community. The improvement of communications would minimize frustration and dissatisfaction.

## The Function of the Teacher

The teacher who understands and guides the process can free the students from fear of authority, lowered self-esteem, the feeling of insignificance; she can release them to express themselves, to show

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their differences, their disagreements; she can communicate to the pupils that it is, in part, their course and have them answer the question "What shall we, the pupils, do about it?"

Awareness of teacher function can make a difference in outcome, even in the more extreme limitations placed upon attendance officers. This is what a member of one of the groups, an attendance officer, said.

JANE: I think I am really talking about myself because I feel guilty about my work since I've discovered through our meetings my own immaturity in my job. My job is governed by the Compulsory Education Law. In many instances the attendance officers use an authoritative approach, especially in cases of parental neglect. We threaten the parent with court action. Prior to our meetings I did a great deal of airect questioning and cross-examination of parents and children. I'm afraid I haven't always given the other person much of a chance to explain. In fact, knowing the child and family, I expected illegal absences. Now I am beginning to see that another approach is sounder. I try to give an opportunity to the parents and children to explain the absence, or rather, let me say, I give them the responsibility for the interview. I notice that when the youngster has the feeling that I'm there to help and not to censure, attendance improves.

Now I explain the law, the possible consequences if irregular and unexplained absence continues, and then give them the responsibility of choosing or determining the necessity for further action. I'm interpreting the court action. I try to make them feel that it isn't a threat but a service to help the child to make a better adjustment.

INSTRUCTOR: Jane, you seem to have a different interpretation of your function as an attendance officer than you formerly held.

JANE: Yes. Before, I was wielding my authority. It gave me a

sense of personal power and inflated my ego, I guess. Now,

after our discussions, I realize that the authority should be used by me to help the parents and children. My job is to straighten out irregular attendance, not to threaten people with court action. I'm paid to help them, not to punish them. I guess if I really believe that, and I'm beginning to, I'll help them and feel much better about the job and myself. Incidentally, I think the law should be amended and attendance officers required to understand some of the ideas we've been talking about, I never realized before how important it is to understand, to be conscious of what you're doing on the job.

Jane's increased comfort in consciously controlling her role is paralleled by that of Lila, a supervisor in the schools.

LILA: I want to mention the fact that in the past three or four weeks many of the people with whom I am working have said to me: "What's happened to you? How relaxed you seem now as compared to last month!" I really think it is due to what has happened to me as a result of our last few sessions. I suddenly realized that what was interfering with my function as a supervisor was the fact that I had been trying to take over the function of an administrator as well. Being angry about the set-up of the school, I had really been trying to solve the problems of administration. In other words, I suddenly became aware of my limited function and no longer felt guilty or irritated over the set-up. I simply felt it was beyond anything I could do and I had better simply do my supervision and not waste my energy complaining about administrative set-ups.

The teacher who is able to accept the views on limited function expressed in this chapter is likely to save a great deal of energy and avoid a good deal of frustration. Each one of us is engaged to discharge specific duties. Our professional responsibility is to carry out our delegated tasks, not to become martyrs or to perform miracles. Sufficient unto the task are the difficulties thereof.

Functioning within prescribed limits is the surest way of structuring the specific educational services and meeting the specific problems of pupils. What the pupil does to and with the specific experience will have its effects on him, however restricted or extensive. The teacher has a limited function, which the whole child reacts to in whatever way he does.

The teacher keeps the general goal of education, the development of the whole child, in the background, but she focuses upon her own specialty. Personality is shaped not in a vacuum but in contexts made up of specific situations. Habits, attitudes, and feelings are acquired as one is exposed to and works through specific problems. No one person, whether parent, teacher, physician, friend, music instructor, or minister, can possibly be competent or wise or skilled enough to guide a child in every direction.

One doesn't learn generally; one always learns within specific situations characterized by limits and focus. What the individual does to and with any experience cannot be accurately predicted in advance. What the pupil will learn from any given, limited experience and apply to other areas of knowledge and action lies beyond the control of the teacher, although she should always be aware of the possible implications.

The belief current in some educational circles that we teach the "whole child" is half true and half false. In a mediate sense, the teacher is concerned with the development of the personality of the child. In practice, however, the teacher must confine herself to the limitations of time and place, and to her own skills or tools—that is, she must function within limited, clearly defined objectives. This is the specific goal of education. The general and specific goals cannot be separated, but they should be distinguished. The child learns as a whole, but the teacher focuses within the limited area of her responsibility.

One final word of caution. Children are not in the classroom

so that teachers can perform a function. Teachers are performing in a way calculated to help children to develop. Slavish adherence to rigid function can become a stupid ritual. The question is "Who can best meet the specific needs of pupils?" The answer is "The person who is professionally qualified to deal with the specific needs." There may be times, places, and events which call for a teacher's assuming responsibilities for which she was not prepared. Generally, however, both teacher and pupils will be protected as well as helped by defining limits and remaining within them.

### Problems for Discussion

- 1. A teacher of algebra meets with the parents of her pupils to discuss the children's progress. Several parents raise the point that the poor work in algebra is the result of (a) too much time spent by their children in viewing television at home, (b) too many other interests, such as music lessons, (c) too many "dates." Is the algebra teacher within her rights to discuss any or all of these matters?
- 2. At a parent-teacher meeting, the question of the grading system is raised. Several parents object to the traditional report cards. Should the teacher of home economics or social science or the gymnasium instructor discuss the issue?
- 3. A teacher of English discovers serious friction in her class between pupils of different "racial" origins. What is her function in meeting this situation?
- 4. A kindergarten teacher observes that one of the children consistently fails to drink the midmorning juice. What, if anything, should she do?
- 5. The school authorities require certain materials in American history to be taught. They provide the syllabus. The American history teacher, because of her experience, considers the selections unprofitable for the pupils. Should she modify or discard the syllabus? Under what conditions?
  - 6. A class in home economics become deeply and vitally in-

volved in a discussion of race relations. Should the teacher indicate the irrelevance of the topic to the current assignment or permit the discussion to continue?

- 7. Should a teacher accept invitations to dinner at the home of some of her pupils? Suppose she has 35 pupils in her class. The pupils in whose home she was a guest will certainly spread the news to their classmates. What are the consequences for the other pupils? Would you suggest the teacher accept 35 dinner invitations (assuming she were invited) or none? Would this form of social activity interfere with her professional function as a teacher of a specific subject?
- 8. Are teachers justified in complaining about the many extracurricular activities they are asked to assume outside of their subject-matter responsibilities? If teachers are interested in the "whole child," shouldn't they undertake these extra duties?

# Selected Bibliography

<sup>1</sup> The concept of a limited function in a professional relationship has been clarified and successfully applied in the fields of social case work, counseling, and group work. One of the best statements is the collection of papers in the *Journal of Social Work Process*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov. 1937.

See also the following:

Basch, Goldie. "One View of the Teaching of Case Work," The Family, Dec. 1939.

Achievement of Responsible Behavior Through Group Work Process, ed. by Helen U. Phillips, University of Pennsylvania, 1950. Miss Phillips is chairman of the Social Group Work Department of that school. This brochure consists of three masters' theses written by students in their final year in the Pennsylvania Graduate School of Social Work. The functional approach to social group work is illustrated through actual group experiences.

Cantor, Nathaniel. Employee Counseling. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, 1945. This study is a generalized statement of the

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application of a limited function in the field of employee counseling. Chapter V describes the general thesis. Chapter VI contains case records of the function of the counselor in operation. The "Case of N," in Chapter VII, was one of the cases dealt with by the author.

### Chapter Seven

# The Role of Challenge

The Dilemma of the Teacher

Redirecting Resistance through Challenge

Degrees of Challenge

Focus of Challenge

Challenge and Age Group

The Constructive Use of Negative Feeling

Consensus

Problems for Discussion

IGNIFICANT LEARNING—that is, learning which involves one's feelings about self and others—necessitates a reorganization of experience. This kind of learning is not always easy. Each of us has a great deal at stake in maintaining our present organization of beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Moreover, we pretend to be other than we are in order to fit in with the image others have of us. This also makes change—that is, learning—difficult.<sup>1</sup>

### The Dilemma of the Teacher

Teachers, too, wish to control pupils and remake them in their image. No self-respecting individual wants to deny his life, his wisdom, and his feeling of rightness. We say that we want to use our knowledge of self, of personality development, to understand and to "help" others. This is often a subtle form of rationalizing our intent to control—whether we are laymen, psychiatrists, social workers, clinical psychologists (directive and non-directive), or teachers.

The professional helper—and the teacher is such—wants to "help" others. The ethical assumption underlying help is obvious. The helper believes he has something to offer. What does he offer? No matter what he says or how he acts, he offers himself, what he basically feels and believes. He is ready to help, that is, on his terms. Respect for and interest in the pupil turns out to be self-respect and self-interest. A frank facing of this often unrecognized fact is the first step in struggling to overcome the tendency to live our lives through others.

We have previously maintained that the teacher who "accepts" differences and who creates a "permissive" classroom atmosphere encourages pupil learning. We are now stating that acceptance of differences and the creation of a permissive atmosphere occur in a context whose *outer* limits are confined to what the teacher wants. Pupils are free to learn and free to express their "differences" pro-

vided they do not fundamentally violate what we, the teachers, believe they should learn and express. Few teachers are prepared to stand by comfortably and watch pupils use their help in such a way as to become juvenile delinquents, insufferable egotists, financial, social, and moral outcasts, and say "I offered my help and these are the products. So be it. I did a good job."

The public-school teacher has to care. Teaching is, basically, a moral profession, and the teacher is a reformer with a mission. Yet, if we believe in the integrity of the individual, we must affirm that the pupil does have the right to learn in his own way, and to fail in his own way. The chances are, and there is empirical evidence in support of this, that there will be less failure if teaching proceeds on the assumption of the integrity of the individual.\* We are now prepared to discuss the meaning of the foregoing remarks for the role of challenge.

One of the principal functions of a teacher is to assume the role of challenger. We shall be concerned in this chapter with illustrating how, when, and where the teacher challenges the pupils. We shall not be concerned with the challenge which the teacher directs toward herself, but such challenge is implied in all that we have to say about her role as challenger of the pupils. In other words, a permissive teacher, in the role of a professional helper, must understand the struggle she will experience and her guilt accompanying the struggle which is aroused when pupils choose to be different from her. She uses her difference, her different reality, to challenge the views and belief of students, not in order to control them, but to help them in so far as possible on their terms. The teacher will experience guilt because she differs from and challenges others. She will realize that at such times she is really expressing herself.

Now, to stand by and genuinely permit the pupil to do whatever he wants with the challenge, even to reject it, is to come as close as one can to offering help without wanting to control. The

<sup>\*</sup>The volumes cited in footnote 2 of "Introduction: Partners in Learning," especially Lucy Sprague Mitchell's Our Children and Our Schools, contain a great deal of evidence on this point.

attitude of the skillful challenger is "I think I know what is good for you—that is, if you become like me, I'll be pleased. If you disagree and remain or become different from me, I'll be pleased, too, because I think you have the right to make the choice." Most of us find the former attitude rather easy to accept, since it allows us to remain in control. Few of us can wholeheartedly and genuinely accept the latter attitude, which characterizes the skillful teacher. By respecting his difference, we lose control over someone else.

In other words, the teacher challenges herself in order better to challenge the pupil. No teacher who is aware of what occurs in the teaching tearning process can escape the dilemma of struggling with her own need to win while at the same time using her difference as an opportunity for pupil growth. If the teacher gains increasing inner security, she can afford to be rejected. She need not become defensive. She stands for what she is, remains comfortable, and permits others to disagree. She does not need the others' support for reassurance. She does not have to control the others since she learns to criticize and control herself.

### Redirecting Resistance through Challenge

Many of us most of the time want our own way. We fight against something or someone so that we can remain as we are. Significant change calls for the reorganization of parts of oneself. Reorganization means self-criticism, disturbance, and conflict, which no one enjoys. Therefore, we resist change. At other times, parts of ourself will yield to the will or wishes of others. One can become identified with another who represents, initially, a different outlook. Becoming identified is not the same experience as being identified with someone. Being identified is a reaffirmation of one's present organization. No change in a different direction is involved. Becoming identified involves a change of structure. The more extensive and intensive the change, the greater will the accompanying disturbance be. The other person's difference can be assimilated and become

the center of one's reorganized feeling experience. The new organization is a yielding of oneself to another's whole or self. Gradually, as fear and struggle are reduced, a bond of common feeling is established which not only permits but encourages one to become like the other.

The process of becoming identified with another who initially represents a significant difference is accompanied by discomfort, but the other does not seek to dominate or impose his difference. He presents it, and permits the individual to accept, reject, or qualify the expressed difference. The learner is free to create his own responses to the difference he encounters. He does not have his own struggle complicated by the additional fight against an alien will being imposed upon him.

This holds important implications for the teaching \interprecess. The pupils enter the classroom with certain kinds of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings. The teacher's function is to help in the development, reorganization, and growth of the pupils. She operates through the specific skills she represents. The pupils can be given the opportunity to create their own responses to their situation so that a meaningful kind of learning can take place. Each pupil will seek a balance between his present organization and the different ones represented by the teacher and other pupils. The problem for the teacher is to gain insight into, and understanding of, the most effective way to introduce difference.

The teacher helps the pupils to find a balance between assimilating difference and expressing their own framework. The teacher does not *insist* that pupils move only in the direction she indicates. The needs of the pupils are important, but not every need has to be dealt with by the teacher. Only those needs are relevant for exploration which relate to the specific help the teacher has been delegated and prepared to offer. Pupils will try to deny some of the needs that they themselves want satisfied. They will deny that they want to play some really meaningful part in their education because, traditionally, they have been led to fear the exercise of their individual differences. They have learned to avoid revealing much of their genuine feelings and reactions because such revela-

tion has meant conflict with adult authority. One side of the pupil wants to change—that is, wants self-expression; the other side is fearful of the emotional disturbance accompanying adult disapproval of genuine difference.

The teacher who is aware of the disturbance involved in genuine learning recognizes her own conflicts. She, too, will want to have her way. Her awareness, however, helps her to control her need to project, to win, to dominate. She uses her difference for the sake of the pupils rather than for the release of her own need for independent expression. She is prepared to accept the pupil's choice of how to deal with the difference she presents.

The teacher who makes such use of herself provides one of the important professional elements in the teaching ⇔learning process. The individual pupils will struggle to maintain their present selves. If they are to change in any significant way, they must struggle with differences which they feel to be an opportunity and not a threat. The process provides the yeast of growth and encourages the desire to learn. The teacher guides the process and introduces the challenge of difference. If there is no challenge, no difference against which or with which one must struggle, important change is not likely to take place. Several excerpts from the seventh meeting of one of the groups illustrate how the members are challenged to reconsider and re-explore their respective attitudes.

We had been discussing group dynamics, especially the factors which block learning. Several members began to relate anecdotes about their classes. Others wanted to criticize supervisors and parents. The instructor asked the group whether the anecdotes and criticisms were relevant to the agreed-upon theme—namely, the factors which prevent learning.

INSTRUCTOR: Do any of you feel that I was arbitrary in cutting off the discussion? Perhaps you should have continued in the directions you were going.

cora: No. At one time I felt, in light of what I had learned about group dynamics, that we should have been left alone. I'm sure,

now, that this is quite unsound. We would have wasted a great deal of time.

HARRY: I'm in complete agreement. No amount of general discussion on our part, I think, would have gotten our admission of how much we are afraid of each other. You helped us to see the role of fear. If it were up to us, it would have taken weeks to have reached the same point. Someone not so involved as we are had to bring it out. You helped us, and I think we were prepared to accept your challenge.

INSTRUCTOR: Would you mind, Harry, explaining that a bit more? HARRY: Well, we were talking about the principals, the parents, and the pupils, all of which had little to do with what we were supposed to deal with. Earlier we had agreed to discuss what blocks learning. We were putting it on everyone but ourselves. It was then, as I recall, that you said, "Wait a moment." There was an embarrassing silence, since you said nothing, and the rest of us kept quiet too. Then you asked us what we thought our criticisms had to do with why pupils are blocked in learning. You said, "What are you afraid of?" Then you said, "Maybe you're talking about everyone else because you're afraid to recognize your own role in blocking pupil learning." That certainly hit me. I'm convinced that fear, in capital letters, is the great stumbling block which keeps all of us from honestly communicating with one another.

In this instance the instructor deliberately challenged the group members. His judgment that they were ready to deal with the direct challenge happily proved to be sound. The following excerpt further illustrates the use of the instructor's difference.

JOHN: I'd like to discuss the problem of discipline. My kids had to learn a certain subject this morning.

INSTRUCTOR: Had to?

JOHN: Well, I wanted them to.

INSTRUCTOR: Does that mean they would?

JOHN: Uh . . . no. I don't think so.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, how would you help them?

JOHN: I don't know. I put the lesson on the board and wanted them to copy it.

INSTRUCTOR: That's one way. Is there another way?

JIM: Well, he could have asked the students to consider with him the importance of what they were to cover for that day so that they might be part of it.

LAWRENCE: I've often felt frustrated just because of that problem; knowing that I couldn't force the kids to learn, and yet wanting them to.

INSTRUCTOR: Are you saying that you are inclined to exploit the children for your own need?

LYNN: That certainly is what takes place.

INSTRUCTOR: What other conflicts does the teacher bring into the classroom?

JOHN: We certainly bring our past experience into the classroom.

INSTRUCTOR: What kind of experience?

JOHN: We certainly bring into the classroom a great deal of frustration and resentment for people pushing us around.

INSTRUCTOR: What do we do with that resentment?

JOHN: I think we sometimes get rid of it by doing the same thing to the children, and making them do what we want.

PHILIP: We certainly have more conflicts now that we bring into the classroom; the conflict between the traditional way of teaching and what we're beginning to learn here. We probably take these tensions out on the kids.

NANCY: What happens to me is that I'm having a great deal of guilt these days because of what I am learning to discover about myself and what I never thought existed. I've been in the habit of ordering kids around. I'm beginning to suggest and request, and I feel uneasy about the old and the new struggle in me. I want to work on these problems, and I don't think I can. I don't know how,

INSTRUCTOR: Isn't that why we are meeting here?

NANCY: If you don't get those things straight, I don't think you can be a good teacher.

INSTRUCTOR: What, in a general way, keeps us from straightening out ourselves?

cora: I think one of the reasons is that we don't put enough effort in discovering why we fail, although down deep we know we do fail.

INSTRUCTOR: Now, why is it we don't put enough effort into it?

Looking at it another way, what is it we do put effort into?

ELIZABETH: We put effort into trying to find reasons why we shouldn't discover what's wrong with us.

INSTRUCTOR: Do all of you agree that we exploit the children psychologically?

DAVE: I'd rather put it this way—that I do a lot of things to the children that make me more comfortable but don't make the children more comfortable. I know that's so and I have to do something about it and I'm going to do something about it.

INSTRUCTOR: But it won't be pleasant and it won't be easy, will it?

pen without being uncomfortable. I felt uncomfortable today. I teach speech and I noticed this morning how I said to one of the boys that his voice sounded terrible. The whole class laughed. It seems to me now that I wasn't very skillful. All that I accomplished was to embarrass the boy. I certainly didn't help him very much.

INSTRUCTOR: Perhaps you did accomplish something more than embarrassing the boy.

DAVE: What do you mean?

INSTRUCTOR: Does anyone want to help?

ELIZABETH: Maybe, Dave, you didn't help the boy but you helped yourself.

DAVE: Check. I get it. I got rid of my annoyance at his expense and drove the boy back into his shell.

INSTRUCTOR: That is, you exploited the boy and used him for your own purposes.

DAVE: That's exactly what happened.

Later during this meeting, the following discussion took place.

ELIZABETH: I'm bothered. I've been trying to figure out how to apply the idea of challenge in my own classroom. I haven't an answer yet. Does the teacher challenge one pupil or the entire class?

LAWRENCE: Perhaps the problem is to arrange a curriculum which would interest everybody.

ELIZABETH: I don't think that's the problem at all. The problem is not what is being taught so much as who is doing the teaching.

INSTRUCTOR: Do all of us realize the implications of what Elizabeth is saying?

ELIZABETH: Well, I've been at college for many years and I am sorry to say that I haven't learned very much about actual teaching. We spent most of the time in defining the kind of subject matter which should be taught and in so-called "methods" but very little time on teaching.

DAVE: I don't think you can teach anyone how to become a skilled teacher.

INSTRUCTOR: That means that we're wasting our time here, doesn't it?

DAVE: No, I wouldn't say that.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, Dave, what would you say?

DAVE: The kind of thing we are doing here isn't done in colleges. We're learning by example. I mean, we're living through what we are talking about, and in that way we catch something of what our words mean.

NANCY: I think there have been a lot of good teachers and that

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there are many good teachers in the schools today who haven't had this kind of work.

instructor: I'm sure that is so, Nancy. A teacher can do a good job without being able to put into words what goes into her performance. But we can't depend upon the unusual teachers, can we? And if we are going to communicate what goes into improved teaching, we had better try to discover it and get it down into meaningful words.

NANCY: Well, you tried putting into words what is involved in teaching in several of your books. But you can read the books and not understand what is really involved.

INSTRUCTOR: By "you," do you mean me? [Laughter]

DAVE: That's exactly the point I'm making. In our meetings you not only talk about the ideas but you demonstrate with us how it's to be done in such a way that we are living through the ideas with you.

INSTRUCTOR: Do you mean you can read a book on teaching or learning and still not really learn very much from it?

NANCY: That's true of books and it's true of most of the college classes.

INSTRUCTOR: What's missing? What accounts for so little happen-ing when you read the books or attend the classes?

DAVE: You have your own way. You can get out of the book whatever you want to put into it. There is no one around to question you. The same thing holds true in a class. The teacher tells you, you listen, and repeat what you hear.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, what's missing?

DAVE: In our meetings here, we're made responsible for what we say. If you don't agree with us or we don't agree with you, we can say so. I guess we're back where we started from. No one is afraid to say what he feels like saying.

INSTRUCTOR: At least, not afraid to say some things.

The reader who reviews the foregoing excerpts will observe that the instructor of the group tried to avoid evaluating what the several members of the group said. He accepted whatever was expressed and, upon occasion, expressed a different point of view, or invited a further development of what was said. In each case the purpose of the instructor's remarks was to challenge, to stimulate further analysis which might lead to a revision or exploration of the speaker's statement or attitude. One of the members stated this as follows:

DAVE: I'd like to give an example of what I get out of this analysis of the teacher's challenge. Suppose a student says something which you, the teacher, think is wrong. You say to the student, "I can see what you mean." You don't have to disagree and tell him that he's wrong. You ask him whether he can see value in any other view. Then the student or pupil won't have to fight you. All that happens is that he has a chance to look back into his own ideas.

### Degrees of Challenge

The following discussion took place during the second meeting. The question arose, "What are some of the needs of teachers in the classroom?"

DAVE: When I come into the classroom every morning I ask myself what must I do to make the kids relax. I'm always uncomfortable when I first come in and try to answer that question.

STANLEY: I go along with that. I think my needs are the children's needs. If I can get the tensions of the children reduced, and if I can succeed in getting them to learn the lesson for the day, I feel good. Otherwise, I'm disappointed.

INSTRUCTOR: Do you mean that you need the children's success

to satisfy your own needs? That is, must you satisfy their needs in order to satisfy your own?

ELIZABETH: How else would a teacher know that she's doing a good job unless she does satisfy the needs of the children?

INSTRUCTOR: That is the important question—namely, how can a teacher know whether she is skilled or not?

ELIZABETH: I think I'm a pretty good teacher. I can teach my children to read and write as well as any teacher in the school. The number who pass the examination gives me the feeling that I have that skill.

HARRY: I think the basic need of each one of us is to win out in whatever we are doing. So we go into our classrooms and expect to have our way. I think we might put it by saying we want to control. [A long silence]

INSTRUCTOR: Has any one of you anything further to add? [An-other long pause]

STANLEY: You don't seem to go along with what we've said.

INSTRUCTOR: I certainly do understand how all of you who have spoken feel about the test of skill. I sense, however, that you are not really as convinced as you appear. You raised the question, and it is certainly one of the most important issues to be explored. Perhaps some of you who haven't yet commented have a different point of view.

JOHN: If a teacher knows his subject and can put it across, he is skilled. I don't see that there is anything more to say about it.

NANCY: I think I'm competent in my subject and I can put it across, but still I feel insecure in the classroom. I think there is a lot more to teaching than knowing your subject. How about your relations to the children?

Dave, Stanley, Elizabeth, Harry, and John share the view that the success of a skillful teacher is measured by the success with which she can control the pupils and put across the subject. Another position can be maintained—namely, that a teacher is successful in so far as she helps the pupils to make use of what is being offered. The immediate problem was to encourage the members of the group to re-examine their position. Each of the speakers could have been personally and directly challenged by the leader. This kind of direct challenge, however, at this early stage of the meetings, would have been resented and would have been followed by defensive intellectual agreement. The students would have projected negatively—that is, would have defended and justified their stand.

The relations between teacher and group members were not yet sufficiently well established, the identification was not strong enough, to support direct challenge. The instructor, therefore, indicated his understanding of what was expressed and, instead of directly challenging the speakers, merely sought to raise doubts. Lawrence and Nancy did express some doubt. By the close of this meeting, most of the members admitted their uncertainty and confusion, as the following excerpt shows.

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder how many of us know how to change ourselves so that we grow in desirable directions.

HARRY: I think very few of us know that.

INSTRUCTOR: Then we can't very well help children, can we? I suppose many of you are confused at this point.

ELIZABETH: Indeed I am.

JOHN: I'm all mixed up. I don't know what the problem is and I think unless you know what the problem is you can't begin to answer it. The only problem I see clearly is that I have the need to teach the kids what I'm supposed to. [Silence]

INSTRUCTOR: Most of you feel the dullness and dreariness of this discussion, I guess.

JOHN: That's exactly the way I feel.

NANCY: I don't think we're accomplishing very much.

INSTRUCTOR: Apparently we have reached a point where none of you feels you can use language to run away from the problem.

You yourselves aren't satisfied with your intellectual defenses. Maybe we have reached a turning point tonight where something may start to happen.

ELIZABETH: I think I see what you mean. Our real problem is to get inside ourselves and see how we really feel about some of these things. What we're trying to find is why we do the things we do in the classroom.

LAWRENCE: What interests me is whether or not we can discover ourselves without outside help.

CORA: I don't think we'd be here unless we felt we could get help.

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During the next three meetings, the members of the group and the leader drew closer together. We had passed the initial stages of trying out one another to discover how safe it was to express difference. The speakers' contributions were not attacked or scorned. Dissent was encouraged. A spirit of inquiry rather than of dogmatic assertion of points of view increased our confidence in one another. As a consequence, the leader was able to sharpen challenge and make it more pointed. The reader will notice the difference in the quality of challenge during the later meeting (the fifth) reported below and the meeting described earlier.

INSTRUCTOR: May I ask what you think we have covered or discovered in the past several meetings about skilled teaching? [A long period of silence during which the members glance at one another and at the instructor] I wonder whether this silence and your inability to answer the question are due to the fact that nothing essential was covered. Perhaps we spent most of the time intellectualizing about the problems and none of us was really involved in the issue.

LAWRENCE: I wouldn't say that nothing happened. I'm pretty sure that much of the time was spent in feeling each other out, try-

ing to discover how much we could risk of ourselves in the presence of each other.

DAVE: That's the way I feel when I come into a new class for the first few times.

INSTRUCTOR: And aren't the children feeling out the new teacher? Aren't they saying, "What's the new teacher like? I hope she won't bother me too much. If she'll tell me what to do, I'll do it with the least amount of effort I can get away with."

JOHN: I certainly recognize that picture.

STANLEY: So do I.

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder whether we tried that on each other for the first three or four weeks.

PHILIP: Well, we couldn't figure out what you wanted.

INSTRUCTOR: Philip, why did you have to figure out what I wanted? Why didn't you try to find out what you wanted?

PHILIP: I guess we were following the same pattern our pupils follow.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, now we've passed the first stage of skirmishing about. All of us, let's hope, will feel comfortable in saying what we want to say in order to help each other learn.

Good rapport having been established, the instructor can risk more direct challenge, as the opening remarks above and student comments bear out. The exchange between Philip and the instructor is straightforward, each saying what he feels quietly and directly, without defensiveness.

Thus, by the end of the fifth meeting of the group, the point is reached at which the members no longer are certain that they understand what they are supposed to do in their classrooms. They realize that they are supposed to teach their subject matters. They are much less certain about what is involved in the process of teaching. They sense that in addition to content there is an area of skill which involves their awareness of self. To be sure, they do not, at this stage, understand the skills, but they are puzzled, confused, and

annoyed with themselves. They have been challenged more and more directly. The leader has presented his difference without spelling it out.

Using one's difference to challenge pupils is no simple matter. There is no formula. In the early meetings of a new group, the challenge directed against the work and remarks of the members must be partial and impersonal. An opportunity must be given to the pupils for taking hold and dealing with the criticism or challenge in their own way. The pupils will feel that something is being accomplished. They thus become more responsible and able to carry even more challenge. During the first meetings, the teacher's difference or disagreement or challenge is not aimed against the pupil as an individual, and therefore the pupil has no need to fight back in order to defend himself. No one has attacked him. He merely has been asked or invited to make a further contribution.

# Focus of Challenge

The focus of challenge may lie in the data or, at other times, may be the point of view of the student. One would suppose that in a class in mathematics, for example, there is no room to employ the concept of challenge or the introduction of the teacher's difference. An answer in mathematics either follows or does not follow. The teacher, it seems, should indicate that the answer given is correct or incorrect. Here is what a mathematics teacher of a senior high-school class discovered over a short period of time.

The idea of challenging students sounds very reasonable, and I have no doubt that it is a sound principle in many classes, but I have found it most difficult to apply in mathematics. Perhaps this results from the type of subject matter involved in mathematics. I find myself struggling with the possibility of helping students to raise their own problems related to the course rather than raising them myself because I realize they aren't terribly interested in the problems. Perhaps I need more understanding and practice.

Three weeks later the same teacher reported:

I am convinced no learning can take place if either answers or interest on the part of students are forced. During the past three weeks I have been disturbed about a group of six students who are doing a review for final examinations with me. They cannot graduate unless they pass that exam. One of the hardest things I've ever experienced in years of teaching was to keep from telling them the answers or the methods to be used in solving the problems. We were using old examinations for the review. Instead of telling them what to do, I asked them what they thought should be done. When they told me, I didn't tell them they were wrong but asked them to try and find out what led to the results. Maybe, I said, they shouldn't start to do the problems unless they were sure they knew what they were doing. I have found from first-hand experience with the group of six what a difference it makes if the students flounder but finally discover for themselves the answers to the questions. I've become convinced that there just isn't any other way to help students understand mathematics.

### Challenge and Age Group

How much difference can the various age groups accept? Can pupils in the primary grades be challenged in the same manner as high-school seniors? This is certainly an important problem. One of the group, a third-grade teacher, raised the question.

JIM: I should like to raise a question about challenging pupils.

Can you challenge very young children? They need a great deal of affection and support from the teacher.

LILA: Most of you know that I am a mathematics supervisor in the primary schools. I certainly agree with Jim that youngsters need a lot of approval. Children, by the time they reach six, seven, or eight years of age, have had the experience of

being in classrooms of about thirty children. If they're a bit slow, they learn, as one child put it, "I have a stupid head." Now, these youngsters who are doing work inferior to the norm of their group must, it seems to me, be encouraged even more than the average child. They do not feel too happy about themselves. I don't think such children should be expected to stand up against too much challenge. On the other hand, I feel the normal kids can be challenged. I have done this with beginners in arithmetic. For example, a child gets the answer by doing the problem in the simplest but not most direct way. I have in mind, for example, obtaining an answer by adding instead of multiplying. I'll ask the child if there is any other way to get the answer. When the kids discover this for themselves, it makes quite a difference in their approach to the multiplication tables and, I think, in their attitude toward arithmetic. What happens is that the teacher tries not to go beyond the point where the kids are at any given time, other than to challenge them to move on to the next steps.

# The Constructive Use of Negative Feeling

Every teacher has lived through periods of confusion and tension and hostility in the classroom. The pupils "gang up" on one another or on the teacher. Sometimes the teacher feels irritated and hostile toward the pupils. Feelings of mutual confidence and respect are at stake. Is it more constructive to deny such feeling or to face it and direct it into useful channels? An example will help to clarify this point.

JIM: I certainly have gained insight into what I do in the class-room. I now realize very keenly that when I go to the class-room I have a terrific need for approval from the children.

I can see now that I have a right to satisfy those needs for reasons of my own, but I should not satisfy them by using the children. The problem is how to deal with the children so that they gain their approval, not so that I gain their approval.

STELLA: I certainly don't agree with that. Well, I know that I shouldn't force respect, but I certainly ought to get it.

NED: Respect is a voluntary thing; it can't be demanded. You've got to win it from the children by your conduct.

STELLA: I insist upon respect in my classes, and I get it. You people don't understand the kind of city children we have to deal with. They're a special type, and you've got to insist upon their behaving themselves.

HARRY: I'd like to say something, but I don't know quite how to put it.

The instructor realized at this point that Harry, who felt irritated toward Stella, feared to admit it. He therefore decided to encourage genuine expression of Harry's feeling. The feeling was there. It could be usefully dealt with only if there were a frank recognition of how not only he but everyone present felt.

INSTRUCTOR: Harry, put it the way you spontaneously feel like putting it.

HARRY: I'm very annoyed. I don't see the distinction between city children and non-city children. Children are children. Some are good, some are bad, some are in-between. Stella, you've been constantly talking about your children being bad, disrespectful, and different. That whole thing seems to bother me, the way you talk about children.

STELLA: Yes! City children are different. I don't care what any of you say. The children in W——— are different from children in any other city.

HARRY: I don't think so.

HILDA: Neither do I.

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder whether someone will tell us just what is

the issue we are talking about?

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The instructor introduced this comment not only to help clarify the issue but also to give the speakers a chance to "organize" their feeling.

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cora: The issue is whether we have the right to demand things of children or whether as teachers we should help them progress a certain way without making demands. The problem is, what are we in that classroom for?

JIM: I think we project into the kids what we have to see there for our own needs. And I think that is unprofessional.

HILDA: We have children in the classroom. We're supposed to be mature adults who are in that classroom to help the children, and I don't think we ought to be talking about children in any other way except as our charges for whom we are responsible to help grow into mature men and women.

STELLA: All I know is that the behavior is not proper behavior. The children come to me with their problems and I tell them what to do.

MABEL: Do you ever listen to their side of the story, what they want to do?

STELLA: Yes, but I usually succeed in having them agree with what I think is good for them. Look, if one of your children took a nickel from another desk, wouldn't you tell a child, "That's bad"?

MABEL: I certainly would not make a moral issue out of it.

STELLA: You mean if you were the mother of that child you wouldn't want that child corrected?

- MABEL: All I said was I would not want to make a moral issue out of it; I would want to try and understand why the child stole the nickel.
- STELLA: I certainly think that child should be corrected at once.
- INSTRUCTOR: The issue is: does a teacher ever tell a child what is morally wrong in so many words? Does the teacher, in short, make direct moral demands of the child without any explanation or examination?
- NED: I think the whole point revolves around the "badness." The traditional teacher has a different frame of reference from the one we are trying to learn here, and they certainly have a different frame of reference than the children have.
- STELLA: I didn't raise any moral issues. I simply told the girl the nickel didn't belong to her, and that she shouldn't have taken it.
- HARRY: I wonder whether we're not jumping a bit too fast? We're all getting too excited.
- INSTRUCTOR: I think you have a point there, Harry. You feel that we're becoming too emotionally involved? On the other hand, wouldn't all of us agree that there has been more movement and real feeling tonight than in any other previous meeting?
- HARRY: That may be, but I certainly do not think that Stella should have to be the one to be put on the spot. To a different degree, all of us have the same problem, and we certainly haven't helped Stella. We've used her as our whipping girl because we're all guilty of acting the same way many times.
- INSTRUCTOR: All of us have been somewhat hostile toward one another this evening. I, certainly, have been irritated. Would it be better to hold that hostility within ourselves and try to control it, or wouldn't it?
- HILDA: Decidedly not. I've seen something for the first time tonight that I've never realized in my entire life. One of my
  troubles as a teacher, and, I realize now, even when I was a
  child, is that I'm always sweet and afraid to be different in
  relation to superiors. I can feel right now the resentment and
  hostility I felt when I forced myself to be sweet and didn't
  realize what was taking place. I think from now on I'll be

much better off, more often, if I speak my piece and show how I feel. When things get out in the open, I think it's healthier for everybody.

JIM: For the first time since we've met, I feel we're coming to grips with something real and not merely using a lot of language.

LEWIS: I certainly learned something tonight. I so appreciate Stella's problems and understand the kind of emotions I raise in others when I act that way—and I do.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, then, maybe we all agree that we need not conceal our feelings, but that it would be better to understand them so that we can use them to help others and ourselves to grow. As Harry put it, "We've used one of our members as a whipping girl." We've projected onto someone else what we don't like to admit holds true for us. Stella, I'm sure all of you agree, was perfectly in order in describing her reactions.

STELLA: And I still feel the same way. The children should respect the teacher, and the teacher must be in control of the classroom. I just can't see it any other way.

Stella is too involved with her own feelings to really grasp the point being discussed. Keeping the group in mind, the leader deliberately ignores Stella's problem and restates the basic issue with which the group was concerned. Incidentally, this is an illustration of how points of view must be qualified as the classroom situation changes. Generally, the point of departure should be where the student is. If students are at different points at the same time, the leader has to exercise judgment concerning the issue to be discussed.

INSTRUCTOR: Hilda thinks it better to get the hostility out. Would it be better all around to do so or does she, as a teacher, have to learn to use her feelings constructively?

HILDA: How do you mean?

INSTRUCTOR: If pupils irritate you, there is no sense in denying that they do, is there?

HILDA: It's superiors, not pupils, who irritate me.

INSTRUCTOR: Have you ever been irritated by your classes?

HILDA: Sure, at times.

INSTRUCTOR: What do you do with that irritation?

HILDA: I try not to show it.

STELLA: If my pupils irritate me, I tell them so in so many words.

HILDA: A professional teacher should try not to lose her temper in the classroom.

INSTRUCTOR: Then, Hilda, there are times when you shouldn't speak your piece?

HILDA: When you are with your equals, you can be more your-self, but when you are in a classroom, you have a responsibility toward the children. You are acting in a professional capacity, so to speak.

INSTRUCTOR: Nevertheless, there are times when you feel irritated. Now, what do you do with that irritation?

LEWIS: Why not make a simple statement to the children that you are annoyed and discuss in a friendly way why you are annoyed and see what everyone wants to do about it? I think in that way the teacher's and pupils' respect for each other would be increased. That's exactly what's taken place here tonight. We let off a great deal of steam and understood why, and I think we all feel better about it and learned about our reactions.

INSTRUCTOR: The teacher, then, uses her different feelings constructively. Instead of taking it out on the children, she uses herself as material to help the pupils grow through an understanding of what took place.

In the foregoing exchanges, a good deal of feeling was generated. Stella's personal tension was obvious. Her need to control was apparent to everyone but herself. Psychologically, Stella was

serving as a study of each member of the group. Each saw part of himself in what she was saying and doing. Each of us, especially teachers, would like to control and dominate more than we admit. How much easier it was to attack Stella than to admit that we were attacking in her what we didn't like in ourselves. The feelings aroused were a sign that the members were involved, and that was highly desirable. The hostile feelings, however, could do harm by splitting the group, lowering class morale, and damaging individual growth. Hence, the instructor's efforts to show that although feelings should not be denied they can be used constructively to help others and oneself to grow by understanding the basis of the feeling.

#### Consensus

Many teachers emphasize the need for "democracy" in the class-room. They place a premium on likeness, identification, consensus. This is not only a denial of democracy as an ethical ideal but a distortion of psychological reality. Consensus—that is, genuine agreement and like-mindedness—is certainly a desirable objective when it is consensus. It is a healthy, legitimate goal, but one rarely achieved by a group of pupils and teacher who represent various personal biases, different backgrounds, different interests, and so forth. What often passes for consensus is submission to or fear of the opinion of the teacher or the majority. Consensus is often confused with an unwillingness to be responsible for difference, unwillingness to assume the risks involved in an independent position. (It is after apparent or pseudo-consensus has been reached that the gossip and criticism of teachers and frustration of pupils are released in the relative safety of locker rooms and corner drugstores.)

Democracy thrives on difference. Indeed, the acid test of respect for others is one's ability to abide difference. Respect for others means respect for difference, since "others" are not like you. Liking those who are like you requires no effort. To accept genuine difference—that is, to accept others who feel, think, or act in ways you do not approve of and in situations where you are involved—

is the test of respect for others. Compromise, adjustment, balance, accommodation, and disagreement, as well as consensus, characterize hygienic human relations, both in the process of development and in the pursuit of goals.

The desire for continual consensus is also psychologically unrealistic. The classroom is not the only reality. When a class strives solely for consensus, consensus becomes a stumbling block depriving the individual of the strength to meet outside situations and circumstances. Pupils acting independently or in smaller groups feel lost without the support of the group, upon which they have become too dependent. When a group becomes too like-minded, the individual members cannot move easily without group support. The members acting on their own fear becoming lost.

Social living, pursuing group objectives, carrying out group purposes away from the sheltering support of like-mindedness bring individual differences into conflict. When the individual accustomed to consensus encounters difference, he cannot easily find balance. He cannot adjust to partial success or partial failure. He wants consensus, or he won't carry on. He is blocked when he is crossed. He hasn't learned, in the classroom, to be responsible and to accept comfortably his own differences or to accommodate himself to the differences of classmates and teacher.

Consensus, as the ideal, is, often, a false and unrealistic objective. The class consisting of different individuals agrees on the one fundamental postulate: respect for one another's rights. Everyone agrees to permit anyone to disagree. Out of differences, the members learn to weigh, to balance, to divide, to go along with others even if only partially satisfied, to go along without necessarily being in full agreement, and even, at times, to go along when one is in disagreement. One submerges independent difference for the sake of the class. This is living with likeness and difference.

Life demands continuous partialization, and the well-adjusted man must always be ready to live by a continuous partial paying off, without wanting to preserve or give out his whole ego undivided in every experience.<sup>2</sup> A class needs to be functionally structured

and to have its limits defined. The limits are found between the needs of the group and the service of the teacher in meeting those needs. Only through such focus can confusion be narrowed and the pupils helped to discover how to reach their objectives. The final responsibility for determining goals lies not with the class as a whole but with the teacher and the pupils. The teacher focuses the discussion, watches the movement and direction of the group, encourages both likeness and difference in others, and challenges the group with her own difference. She does not strive for consensus or for disagreement. She helps the pupils to discover their strengths and their weaknesses, their similarities and their differences, so that they may more profitably learn to relate to one another in carrying forward their objectives, in a spirit of compromise, partially satisfied, partially dissatisfied, but willing to work together. Like any other of life's experiences, class meeting, if productive, cannot remain all sweetness and light. Why should everyone like everyone else under all circumstances or under any given circumstance?

Our concern throughout this chapter and the entire book is with the teaching \( \int \) learning process. We are not unmindful of the fact that in many subject matters—for example, in the mathematical and physical sciences—there is little, if any, room for honest difference of opinion. There are established bodies of factual data and recognized procedures of inquiry. Similarly, one is not free to develop and insist upon an independent French grammar without the risk of being misundertsood or institutionalized.

Our direct concern is not with the knowledge-products—that is, the specific goals of any given school or classroom—but with the teaching \( \infty \) learning processes through which such goals are most effectively achieved. Even the specific goals of any one class are chiefly important in so far as they contribute to the development of increasingly mature young men and women.

What is of greatest significance is the quality of their group experience—the ability to relate to difference and to disagreement, to accept failure without despair, to win the regard of one's peers without sacrificing the respect of one's self, to appreciate the old

without condemning the new, and to make use of the new without condemning the old.

School experience, one of the most significant cross-sections of social life, involves individual differences which, at times, conflict. Constant adjustment is inevitable. The pupil and the teacher want to be like others and they want to be different. The teacher must help the pupils find a balance between their own interpersonal and group needs. She presents problems (limitations) for the pupils to face, recognizing that the pupils must move at their own pace and in their own way. The teacher recognizes that her own needs must be kept apart from the needs of the pupils. The teacher represents an outside reality, the specific goal of the course, with which the pupil must deal as long as he remains in the class. How the teacher brings that reality, a cross-section of social living, to the pupil depends upon how well she makes use of classroom rapport, which includes difference (challenge).

It is to be expected that new adjustments in relating to other pupils, to the differences of the teacher, and to outside limitations over which neither pupils nor teacher have control will be accompanied by feelings of discomfort, fear, and conflict. The pupils will sometimes experience guilt and confusion, or resentment and hostility, toward one another and toward the teacher. The teacher, too, at times, will experience similar feelings toward some of the pupils. These feelings are real and have to be faced in order to be controlled and used.

Aware of what is happening, the teacher helps to narrow confusion during the first meetings. Her challenges contain no trace of blame or condemnation, no ridicule or badgering or humiliation. The challenge takes place in a warm friendly atmosphere of inquiry and exploration. The pupils may agree or disagree with or challenge the teacher. As the meetings continue, identification with the teacher, other pupils, and the materials occurs. The teacher's challenges increase and become more direct. New ambivalences are aroused, and new resolutions haltingly discovered. Learning is taking place. The process never ceases, for teacher or pupils, if learning continues.<sup>8</sup>

### Problems for Discussion

- 1. Do you agree that everyone acts in the light of self-interest, that we want others to be like us?
- 2. What must the teacher learn to enable her to allow pupils to differ with her?
- 3. Do you think it possible not to care whether some of your pupils criticize you unfavorably? Could you still respect the pupils' right to feel that way and not be prejudiced against those pupils?
  - 4. Is a popular teacher necessarily a skillful teacher?
  - 5. Is a skillful teacher necessarily an unpopular teacher?
- 6. Is "challenging" a pupil the same thing as criticizing him? If not, how do they differ?
- 7. Is a teacher ever justified in "asserting" her own point of view? If your answer is in the affirmative, give some examples.
- 8. Would you support the view that a teacher may, on occasion, directly criticize what a pupil says or does? In what circumstances?
- 9. A teacher who questions a pupil directly expects an answer. Doesn't this invariably place the pupil "on the spot"? Is this procedure desirable at times?
- 10. How can the teacher be sure that her challenge is not felt as a threat?
- 11. We often hear and use the expression "Live and let live." What does this expression mean when applied to the teacher-pupil relation?
- 12. Is psychological discomfort on the part of teacher and pupils inevitable in all genuine learning? Why?

# Selected Bibliography

<sup>1</sup> Rank, Otto. Psychology and the Soul. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950, p. 10. This volume was published posthumously. The title is misleading. The German title is

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Seelenglaube und Psychologie. There is no adequate English translation for the German noun Seele. "Spiritual" would, we think, come closer to it than "soul." The study is Rank's attempt to show how man seeks to deny that life comes to an end with death. There is the paradox that scientific knowledge denies man's immortality but, nevertheless, man refuses to accept the conclusion. Values, spiritual constructs, and the quest for meaning in our lives cannot be intellectually rationalized away. Chapter I, "Understanding Oneself and Others," is an extremely penetrating analysis of the basic subjective character of modern psychological inquiry. It is a rather startling conclusion that our objective psychology contains nonrational elements.

- <sup>2</sup> Rank, Otto. Will Therapy and Truth and Reality. New York: Knopf, 1945, p. 135. Will Therapy is the best statement of Rank's contribution to an understanding of individual behavior. It is an extremely difficult book to read but is, in our opinion, a very important one. (Incidentally, Carl Rogers' thinking had been stimulated by the work of Rank.)
- <sup>8</sup> Adult Leadership. The March 1953 issue, Adult Education Association of U. S. A., 743 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. contains one of the best series of articles on group dynamics known to us.

## Chapter Eight

# Learning Is Personal

The Problem of Synthesis

The Role of the Teacher

The Bribe of Praise

Forcing Participation

Problems for Discussion

his particular human potentialities. He will develop, then, the unique alive forces of his real self: the clarity and depth of his own feelings, thoughts, wishes, interests; the ability to tap his own resources; the strength of his will power; the special capacities or gifts he may have; the faculty to express himself, and to relate himself to others with his spontaneous feelings. All this will enable him to find his set of values and his aims in life. In short he will grow, substantially undiverted, toward self-realization. And this is why I speak . . . of the real self as that central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique to each, which is the deep source of growth.— KAREN HORNEY, Neurosis and Human Growth.

HE TEACHING \(\int \text{LEARNING} \) process is a tool for acquiring understanding as well as information. Subject matter and situations provide the conditions for learning, but the individual will-to-learn is the effective agent of change.

We shall see, in terms of our seminar groups, how students can be given the opportunity as well as the responsibility for translating ideas. The instructor refrains from telling the speakers what he means, leaving them free to discover their own meanings and to deal with their feelings in their own way. It does not follow that the students are left to stew in their own juices. They are challenged by the instructor to be responsible for the positions they take and the views they express. In this chapter we shall try to describe how the teacher helps the students to make their own syntheses.

#### The Problem of Synthesis

The "lonely ones" in our society have become sensitized to the corroding confusion of modern society. They are acutely aware of

the breakdown of our traditional value systems. They realize the need for principles of conduct and, at the same time, the provincial character of all principles. Activity which is to be more than sound and fury should become meaningful, dignified, and integral. Striving needs to be justified, and suffering made intelligible. Yet so much of our activity is undignified, unintelligible, and disintegrative. How and where can we find a sense of direction?

This is the problem of synthesis, one of the basic problems of education. Every responsible person—and every person is responsible, since no one lives or stands alone—attempts to deal in some way with the world he carries around within him. His experience requires some kind of order if he is to remain sane or sober. The kind of order he imposes upon his inner life reflects the quality of living he experiences. The neurotic synthesizes his experience in one way, the rigid religionist in another, the self-assured, successful business executive in still another, and so on. No one of us succeeds in establishing an altogether dependable or thoroughly consistent order. Each of us harbors a jungle of contradictory forces which reflect and shape the complex society we live in.

For example, how much does one contribute to a "worthy" Community Chest campaign? How does one determine "worthiness"? Should I resent the illustrations of bedraggled children with the caption "Suppose This Were Your Child?" because the sponsors are exploiting me by seeking to generate guilt feelings in me? Or am I using this insight to justify giving less than my social self feels I should contribute? "Should contribute?" Why should I contribute to the local Community Chest campaign and not to the fund to pay the expenses of the American Olympic teams? Wouldn't the good will of American teams in foreign countries mean more than my prorated contribution to the local Family Service Society, which would try to keep together a family which might better have separated years ago? How do I know? Then what do I do?

Again, one feels deeply that the individual should be respected. At least, one repeats that principle in speeches and discussions and social gatherings and then violates it daily in association with chil-

dren, especially one's own, store clerks, subordinates, and racial minorities or majorities. We call faculty or committee meetings to decide the penalty for pupil cheating in examinations and some time later we cautiously manipulate our tax returns. New York State cancels Bertrand Russell's appointment to teach at The City College of New York because he is morally unfit to be a teacher, but the same Lord Russell served a prison term because of his conviction that World War I was evil. (Russell changed his views in World War II.) An inmate awaiting execution in Sing Sing prison slashes his wrists. He is rushed to the prison hospital, and several prison guards offer their blood for a series of transfusions. Six months later the inmate recovers and is executed.

One can safely make the generalization that every teacher, like every other adult, carries a great deal of confusion within him. We are frequently ambivalent with respect to decisions affecting our intimate relations, our peers, and the local and professional groups to which we belong. The problems of divided loyalties often confront us in our daily living. To communicate with others, we have to understand how they feel. The common expression "To understand all is to forgive all" is hollow. If all is understood, there is nothing to forgive. One is an observer and refrains from moral judgment. If, on the other hand, one is committed to an act or cause because of his likes or dislikes, moral judgment is inevitable, and understanding of the other is almost gratuitous or gets in the way. Thus, we find ourselves playing the role of both observer and participant. To integrate both levels requires knowledge, love, and wisdom, and the strength of will to persist in the continuous, tiring, confusing effort. It is no wonder that all of us resist the struggle of divided loyalties and seek relief and release through projection of our own needs and through building defenses which justify our actions and conceal our confusions.1

Few of us deliberately persist in the quest for syntheses of experience. We lean on traditional values or exploit the prestige of position, money, and possessions to reassure us, or we depend upon authorities for their answers. In a word, we employ the

echoed syntheses of others, which, too often, remain rituals and rules protecting us against the struggle of creating our own meaning for human experience. Instead of crystallizing our confusion, we tend to justify our uncertainty, and we cease to learn.

Every pupil, like every teacher, must come to terms with a reality over which, to a great extent, he has no control. History is indifferent to the plans and purposes of individuals. Man must live in pieces. Every choice he makes is a denial of alternative choices which are potentially present. Anticipation is greater than realization. The satisfaction of achievement is short-lived. Old problems arise in new form. In our society of changing institutional conditions, individual uncertainties cannot be easily resolved. There are too many contending ideas and ideals, too many contradictory directions which paralyze action or lead to blind allcys. We desperately need norms to bring more order to human life, to help us understand our relations to the world, to society, and to ourselves. Teachers lacking meaningful syntheses cannot synthesize for pupils. Furthermore, even if the teacher, sensitive and alert to the complexities of acquiring understanding, succeeds in grappling with the problems of responsible decision, how can she translate her wisdom for the pupil?

The answer, for us, is that she cannot live the life of the pupil. No one can meaningfully transfer ethical responsibility to another. The best the teacher can do is to illuminate for the pupil what is involved in possible choices. This is difficult enough, since no man really knows enough to estimate correctly the risks and consequences of daily decision. Every answer to a problem which is meaningful in a complicated human context is compounded of a great deal more than knowledge or logic. Risk, fear, courage, uncertainty, accident, will, and guilt also enter, in varying degree, into any significant decision. Attitudes, values, knowledge, and feelings are the core of every important decision. The ethically responsible person making the choice is, in the last analysis, the only one competent to make the judgment, the synthesis. A meaningful decision always involves some degree of conflict. To seek the comfort of abstract

precision or arbitrary decision through knowledge or verbal answers is one of the cardinal sins in educational philosophy. It robs the pupil of the chance to discover the struggle involved in learning.

#### The Role of the Teacher

The attitude of the teacher who has realized what is involved in learning can be expressed, perhaps, as follows: "Here is a problem. I'm really not sure myself what the many hidden assumptions are. I won't pretend that I have complete confidence in any one answer. I am certain that if I did it would hinder rather than help you if I gave it. This is the problem, and here are some data. How does it seem to you? What can you afford or not afford to do with it? In either case, do you want me to help you to clarify what you may be experiencing? Do you trust me sufficiently to want my help, or am I a threat? Perhaps you are afraid to be responsible for your own attitudes and feelings. You dare not make a decision which runs counter to what is expected. You would feel too guilty and fearful. Perhaps we teachers are responsible for making you afraid to seek our help. We have led you not to trust us. We do seem pretty pontifical and righteous and all-knowing, don't we? We make you compete for grades based upon how good a memory you have. We ask you questions and want our own answers. We examine you for a hodgepodge of unrelated facts which are no part of your vital experiences. We publish honor roles with the names of your acquaintances who have played the rules of our little game, and we make you feel inferior.

"Well, dear children, would it really surprise you to learn that most of your teachers feel the same way? We do. We're afraid of our supervisors and principal, and even of some of the other teachers. We keep a great many of our feelings to ourselves because we want increases in salary and promotions. We feel very bad about a great many things we do, and we don't believe in some of the things we have to do.

"You see, we, too, are afraid to make decisions, because we

feel threatened. We go along. That seems to be the safest thing to do. You should hear your teachers talking with one another, though, when we are away from the classrooms and the school. I'll bet our gossip matches what you say about us. It's too bad that we can't discuss all these things openly. No. I don't mean we can't, I mean we will not. We haven't the courage. Somehow and somewhere, the starch has been taken out of us.

"I'd like all the more to feel that you are going to have the chance to be different. Try not to let your teachers and classrooms keep you from learning. I don't mean learning such things as the principal cities in your state. I mean you should feel free to ask the teacher, 'Why should we know the names of the principal cities in the state?' This question is the important one, because you had the courage to ask it and it is your question. Then perhaps you and your teacher together can explore the answers to the question and you can tell her how you feel afterward. You might even want to study about the cities. In any event, I am convinced that the way in which I order my feelings, ideas, and ideals cannot be of much use to you. My efforts to learn are peculiar to me. My conflicts and struggles and defenses are my own. Your conflicts and your struggles and your way of learning must remain yours. I probably realize this much more keenly than you do and understand, in a general way, what takes place. I'll help you to learn, if you want my help. But don't believe for one second that I can learn for you."

The teacher who is profoundly convinced of the truth that every person inevitably creates his own synthesis also realizes the struggle involved in the process. Every person plays many roles. He is at times primarily an observer, at other times an active participant, and, most often, both at the same time. He is defensive, yet convinced of his objectivity, and really indifferent about social issues concerning which he feels momentarily indignant. Unsure of himself, he seeks reassurance by imposing his will on others. Fearing his own differences, he cannot easily abide the threatening differences in others. On the other hand, the individual who continues to wonder and to learn and to change acquires the hu-

mility born of self-humiliation. Humility cannot be taught. It has to be achieved through struggle and insight.

The teacher who continues to learn will allow pupils to learn. Continuing "to learn," in this sense, does not mean continuing the usual learning through "courses." It refers to growth in self-insight, increased awareness of what occurs in interpersonal relation—in short, learning more about the teaching \learning process through personal development. The teacher's understanding of the learning process, coupled with her skill in guiding it, creates the dramatic occasions which can be used by the pupils for their own growth. Her understanding, perception, and timing will communicate itself and encourage the pupil to create something real and meaningful for his ongoing experience. This kind of artistic teaching does not easily lend itself to analytic dissection, because the quality of the context, the relation between teacher and pupil, and the latter's will-to-learn are among the most important elements in learning. We can, perhaps, better communicate how pupil insight is encouraged by presenting several situations in context.

During its fifth meeting, one of our groups was discussing the differences between knowledge, learning, and feeling. The discussion was rather perfunctory. The group members were seeking to say what they thought was correct, but no one was really involved in or committed to the ideas. The instructor was wondering what could be done or said to have the members realize for themselves how hollow and unproductive the discussion had become. The transcribed record follows.

LAWRENCE: What is learning?

JIM: Learning is a changing of personality. You're always changing your personality. You never do anything twice the same. The more things you know, the greater variation there is in your responses. Isn't learning what you get from experience? The things we have experienced deeply are the things remembered or learned. Things that go in one ear and out the other

are the things we haven't remembered. It's like driving a car; if you do it often enough, it becomes automatic and then you have learned it. You have learned it because you are experienced. The same thing happens if you learn the multiplication tables or geography.

INSTRUCTOR: What does it mean to learn geography, to have experience in and with geography?

JIM: It means to memorize the facts.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, if we learn geography, say, where the Mississippi River rises, what are we learning? What kind of experience do we have?

JIM: Well, in geography, we also learn about countries and the people.

INSTRUCTOR: Suppose the children are studying the geography of Manhattan. They learn about the life of the people. What have they learned that is significant for them?

JIM: Well, they learn to appreciate the people of New York.

INSTRUCTOR: Would you like to explain what you mean by an appreciation of the people of New York? [A long silence]

Lawrence had raised a fundamental issue—namely, what is learning? Jim repeats several clichés about personality—it's always changing; one learns from experience; if you repeat things often enough, like driving a car, you have learned; learning means to memorize the facts. The sensitive ear of any experienced teacher recognizes facile expressions of verbal stereotypes.

The instructor could have "explained" to Jim that he was not discussing the problem of learning as a vital, organic, experience which involves the learner, which calls forth some creative effort on the part of the learner to do something to and with the data. The explanation, however, would not have been very helpful. Instead, the instructor tried to encourage Jim to follow through on what he meant by "learning geography," by "learning about countries and the people," by "appreciating the people of New

York." Perhaps by working through what he meant by the phrases, Jim would gain further insight into the meaning of learning and see it as something more than "memorizing the facts." The instructor wanted to help Jim to reach an enlarged understanding through his own creative effort.

Jim was given the opportunity to explain what he meant. He chose to remain silent, as did the other members of the group until Muriel commented.

MURIEL: I work with handicapped children who are at home. It's amazing how little experience they have. Well, they do memorize the things, and I still think it's learning.

ELIZABETH: I don't think. . . .

MURIEL: Well, it seems to me. . . .

ELIZABETH: The children haven't. . . .

MURIEL: I still think. . .

INSTRUCTOR: Could we stop for a moment, please? What just took place?

BERT: Well, just at that point, both Elizabeth and Muriel had something to say, and they were afraid unless they got it out, they would forget.

LAWRENCE: They just had to say what they had to say. They were all tied up emotionally and they had to get it out.

ELIZABETH: No, no. . . .

LAWRENCE: They had to say what they had to say.

ELIZABETH: No, no, that wasn't it. Muriel had said something and I wanted to make sure she'd see what I meant, and I couldn't wait for her to finish. I had to make sure she'd see my point of view, else I would have forgotten it.

INSTRUCTOR: Do you mean, Elizabeth, that you had to make her see your point?

ELIZABETH: Yes, yes. Of course.

INSTRUCTOR: Elizabeth, you were going to make her see something? Your point of view was the important thing, and Muriel just had to see what you were trying to say? I wonder whether

all of you would like to hear the last few minutes of the record played back. It might prove of interest, although some of you might prefer not spending the time and pushing on. How do you feel about this?

• • •

Muriel and Elizabeth were interrupting each other, seeking to impose their respective points of view. We had been discussing the nature of learning. Jim had not got far, nor had the others. They remained silent, probably because no one felt secure in pursuing the matter.

After a few moments of uncomfortable silence, Muriel picked up the discussion and reiterated that memorizing things is learning. Elizabeth started to say something, but Muriel insisted on her point of view, as did Elizabeth. Neither one was listening to the other.

"If only they could hear themselves," the instructor thought, "they'd really experience what being defensive means. If they could, for a moment, listen critically, they themselves might gain insight into what happened." It was at this time that the playback was suggested, to give them and others a chance to experience what had happened. It seems that this is precisely what took place. There was unanimous agreement on hearing the playback. The group listened very attentively.

MURIEL: I just learned something terrible about myself. I'd like to put it into words. It might help so I'll never forget what just took place. The feelings we have about our ideas prevent us from seeing how other people feel about them. We want to impose our ideas on others. I would never have believed that possible if I hadn't just heard what took place.

INSTRUCTOR: Would you like to explain further?

MURIEL: Well, when you played that back and I listened to myself as if I were listening to someone else, I realized how concerned I was with my own feelings and ideas, and not with Elizabeth's. My feelings blocked me from listening to what Elizabeth was saying.

INSTRUCTOR: And do you feel that, as teachers, our feelings about what we are saying and doing blocks us from attending to the attitudes of our pupils?

MURIEL: Yes, indeed. And that is why I think that if we are not sincere in whatever we think or do, our children can sense it. For example, I always thought of myself as being quite democratic. Now, no matter what I think about that, I certainly wasn't democratic in my relationship with Elizabeth just now. I was pushing my point of view down her throat. I was thinking of myself and not of her. I was concerned with myself rather than with the situation. I think the way I was concerned with myself tonight would prevent me from being a good teacher. It is shocking to discover that. I never thought of it in quite this way before. I feel quite terrible.

INSTRUCTOR: Muriel, would you want to help us by trying to crystallize what took place before you got the insight?

MURIEL: Well, when you called my attention to what was happening by playing back the conversation, I certainly felt embarrassment over what I had done. Then I felt a little bit panicky.

INSTRUCTOR: It wasn't a very comfortable feeling, I suppose.

MURIEL: Quite the contrary, I was very uncomfortable. Then you asked me a question and I began saying something and felt a little bit less uncomfortable. Then, after Lawrence started talking, I thought to myself, "Well, this time I'll listen." I started to interrupt, and then I caught myself and stopped. I said to myself, "Listen to Lawrence." I wanted to work with the group instead of standing outside the group. It wasn't a good feeling to realize how many times I must have acted that way in the classroom. I am certainly glad I learned that tonight. I know it will not be an easy thing to stop. When you realize what you have been doing for years. . . . I didn't think I was that kind of a person.

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder if anyone would care to comment on the

last ten minutes of tonight's meeting. Was it different from our discussion earlier tonight?

MURIEL: Certainly the last ten minutes were very uncomfortable for me as compared with the rest of the night.

ELIZABETH: That goes double for me.

BERT: Well, what I think has happened is that tonight, for the first time, the discussion has become personalized for all of us. We have all been involved emotionally.

enough has taken place in the last five minutes to make me want to come back and find out. At first, I had my doubts whether or not I was gaining anything for the time spent. But I'm beginning to feel that something is going to happen. I think you are beginning to motivate us so that we will be able to accept and discover what you are trying to tell us. Really, we are motivating ourselves tonight.

INSTRUCTOR: How? Why do you feel that way? What is taking place that makes you feel that way?

LAWRENCE: We certainly have a lot of problems, but none of us thought of talking about ourselves as being involved in becoming a good teacher. We certainly push kids around.

HARRY: I remember once being irritated and I said to a teacher at college, "I have fifty points in graduate work, and I have never picked up a new technique to help me in teaching." She said to me, "The only technique which is new that you can acquire must come from yourself." I didn't know what she was talking about, but I think I'm beginning to see what she meant. I guess it must come from an understanding of yourself. That's the new technique. I guess it all goes back to understanding our own personalities. I once read in a mental-hygiene book that every teacher brings to the class a hidden personality. I think that's what we're talking about. Sometimes we don't really know ourselves, and I suppose it is this hidden personality we are trying to discover.

INSTRUCTOR: What is it that we hide from ourselves?

HARRY: Well, we carry around a great many different attitudes

toward the people we love at home, toward our pupils, toward our parents, toward our friends, and we don't like to face these attitudes. We don't examine them carefully, and these unresolved problems are some of the tensions we bring into the classroom and take out on our pupils.

• • •

Elizabeth, Bert, Lawrence, and Harry find something meaningful in the experience. They move away from formal language and become significantly involved in a problem that hits home. They begin to see that a meaningful discussion of teaching and learning involves their feelings about themselves. This marks the beginning of a new synthesis. Genuine learning has taken place. There is no substitute for active involvement. The instructor could have repeated the statement that learning is a vital, organic experience and the group members would have agreed, but without the quality of understanding they achieved through their own active effort. The next meeting started as follows.

MURIEL: I'm convinced that the average teacher hasn't enough confidence in herself to do a good teaching job.

JIM: What do you mean?

MURIEL: I was thinking of last week's discussion between Elizabeth and myself. We continued to interrupt each other, and I was quite embarrassed to discover that I was not really listening but was insistent upon putting my own point of view across. I was so wrapped up in what I wanted to say that I wasn't able to listen to anyone else. I had thought I was a very democratic person until I heard the playback and realized to my embarrassment how I was insisting on jamming my ideas through. I wasn't thinking of anyone but myself.

JIM: I went through a similar experience today. One of the boys asked me the difference between "psychological" and "physio-

logical" as I was talking to the class. I was annoyed at the interruption and told him he didn't have to know. The moment I heard myself, it occurred to me that I was unfair. Last week's incident between Elizabeth and Muriel came to my mind, and I felt pretty small. After class I called the lad, explained the difference, and apologized for not giving him an explanation when he wanted it. Now this is what is important. Not only did I feel better but I noticed later that afternoon that the boy asked a great many questions. He seemed more interested and active in our work than at any time before. I wonder how often teachers discourage pupils by not paying attention to what they want to know.

. . .

Compare Jim's last statement with his former, perfunctory remark (p. 181) that learning consists in memorizing facts. Jim did something to himself as a result of the preceding meeting. How he did it is not clear, but he did it for himself, and no one could have done it for him. The most a teacher can do is to arrange the optimum conditions under which one can be freed to learn.

# The Bribe of Praise

Most teachers would probably support the view that "praise" is of value in encouraging pupils to learn. By praise we do not mean the relatively objective judgment of another's performance. The kind of praise we refer to in this context is the opposite of blame—that is, we praise what we like, just as we punish or condemn that which we do not like. In other words, we do not praise performance but express how we feel—often for ulterior motives.<sup>2</sup>

Such praise places control or motivation outside the pupil. The pupil strives for the praise, the good will, or the approval of another rather than striving to perform well. School grades naturally come to mind. Pupils very often work for "praiseworthy" marks

rather than because of inherent interest in their studies. They seek to meet standards external to themselves in order to win approval from others.

Again, praise is often used by the teacher as a weapon to manage the pupil, or as a kind of bribe. If I say nice things about you, you will like me and do what I want you to do. The teacher believes that this encourages the child. Closer analysis will reveal, we believe, that, more often than not, this encouragement is an expression of the teacher's personal gratification or personal need to control on her own terms. Praise employed in this sense robs the pupil of self-motivation. It is important for pupils to experience both success and failure in what they do without fearing punishment for failure or praise for success. This builds self-reliance, self-motivation, and self-discipline.

During one of the meetings, the question of the use of praise was raised.

NED: I don't know how children in my class operate successfully apart from my giving them approval. In other words, they do what they do not because they see the intrinsic worth-whileness of what they're doing but because what they're doing is praised by me. If I approve what they are saying or doing, they will be more likely to grow and change.

cora: I think that is terribly condescending. Who are we to give praise?

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder why you say that it is condescension?

CORA: Who are we to give praise?

INSTRUCTOR: Well, teachers do. Now the question is: What lies behind their giving praise? I am referring, of course, to those situations where praise is not really called for by the performance.

NED: I guess what I'm really seeking is the approval of the kids; that is, if I say nice things about them, they will like me and then I am convinced that I am a good teacher because I am popular.

INSTRUCTOR: I suppose there is no one, however skilled, who isn't human enough to want the approval of others.

NED: Do you people think that children, let us say around the age of nine, are old enough and mature enough to be able to do certain things, get insight, and gain their own self-esteem without the approval of others being involved.

CORA: I'm sure of it and I have seen it.

HILDA: I agree with Cora. I think children do what others want because they want security. Now, if we give them understanding and they feel secure, they will then do what they want because they want to do it. I know that because I have done it.

INSTRUCTOR: You mean that if we gave more understanding, there would be less need for false praise? What do you think of that?

# Forcing Participation

JIM: What do you do when a child doesn't participate? If you call on him, you're pulling him back into the discussion. He's not coming back; you're pulling him back and trying to force insight.

HILDA: That's not going to help him very much. He will give you the kind of answer that he thinks your question calls for.

INSTRUCTOR: Perhaps there are ways of helping people to participate without directly calling upon them. Hasn't that occurred here on many occasions?

HARRY: Yes. I noticed tonight when you lifted your head and glanced at Cora. She wanted to talk. She spoke when your nod encouraged her.

INSTRUCTOR: Can you learn how to do this from reading books?

HARRY: Certainly not.

CORA: Of course not.

HILDA: You've got to learn it by struggling with yourself and making mistakes and then observing and realizing what you have done that wasn't sound. There is your will-guilt\* struggle all over again. That certainly means a lot to me now. You can't force children into growing. Teachers insist on participation. They call on them because they don't realize that insight can't be forced.

CORA: I noticed tonight the ease with which we talk about each other's feelings. Now it seems to me that you have to gain insight and make the struggle within a given situation. In other words, just as we are helping each other throughout these meetings, in a similar way we can learn and help each other in our own classroom as we work with our children and talk with our colleagues.

INSTRUCTOR: I suppose this comes down to leaving pupils alone—that is, not pressuring them but helping them.

"There is your will-guilt struggle all over again," remarked Hilda. In the final analysis, learning is a private, individual matter. Every individual utilizes what is potentially present in the light of his unique capacities and interests. Anything which tends to threaten the security of one's present organization will be resisted. The forms of resistance are many, ranging from the development of a psychosis to a slavish dependence upon traditional expectations. The function of a neurosis or of stereotyped respectability is to conceal from consciousness the struggle accompanying change and growth. In both cases the individual does not want to assume the consequences of expressing his differences. He fears the will-guilt struggle he will have to undergo.

There are few individuals who are completely unafraid of life, who can comfortably accept one of the fundamental truths of personality development: that wisdom is acquired through affliction. We often want self-esteem and social approval at the same time,

but we do not want to experience the fear of disapproval which results from self-assertion or the resentment which we experience with its denial. We want it both ways without having to pay the price. The hard fact is that growth and wisdom and maturity cannot be attained without psychological payment in the form of personal struggle. One must learn to live with and to accept limitations. To accept oneself means to become responsible for one's decisions and to assume the risks of social or self-disapproval. Frequently we feel guilty at not conforming, or frustrated and hostile if we do conform.

When, how, and where does one decide to take a stand when one is pulled in two or more directions? The most complicated electronic calculating machine cannot give the answer, because the machine is not charged with ethical responsibility, because it cannot take into account ethical "oughts" or problems of "What should I or ought I to do?" The "I," the individual-social evaluating creature, in the last analysis, assumes the burden and risk of decision when alternative courses of action present themselves. The individual, furthermore, consciously or compulsively deals with the dissatisfaction which follows any decision he makes, since part of him—that side which is denied—is not satisfied. No one person can live for another. No one can quite enter into the unique feelings of another. No one can learn for another. Learning is private.

The implications of the foregoing for the teaching ⇔learning process are far-reaching. The pupil can be encouraged to drop some of his defensiveness and fear of social (teacher and class) disapproval. It is difficult enough to struggle with oneself without having the additional burden of struggling against the demands or threats of others. The teacher can help the pupil in self-discovery and self-appropriation of significant learning by assisting in the clarification of pupil uncertainty. Above all, the teacher who becomes convinced that important pupil learning is self-motivated will guide the class and consider the data in a manner which aids self-learning. Any other kind of learning is relatively unimportant, a matter of memory and recall, or ritualistic.

Carl Rogers, head of the Counseling Center of the University

of Chicago, has stated, "I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning. Such self-discovered learning, truth that has been personally appropriated and assimilated in experience, cannot be directly communicated to another." 3

There are many kinds of learning, such as foreign languages, world history, the multiplication tables, the quotations on the New York Stock Exchange, the shortest route from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, riding a bicycle, repairing a radio, playing the harp, or neuro-surgery. Such knowledge or skills may become significant for an individual's behavior if the person assimilates what he knows or does into his sense of selfhood, his feeling of security, adequacy, and self-esteem. The assimilation is the synthesis of any kind of learning into a significant sense of personal well-being and self-regard.

The test of significant learning, in the final analysis, remains with the learner. The teacher provides the help and the support, but she cannot supply the essential and final motivation to learn. The student cannot be bribed or forced or threatened into genuine synthesis of his experience. Learning depends upon what one does to and with one's experience. That is a personal matter. After all is said and done, learning remains a private matter, a personal, creative synthesis of one's experience. We have seen that significant learning is an activity which must involve the learner. No one can learn for him. This does not mean, however, that a teacher cannot perform an important and socially necessary function in helping him to learn. Indeed, the preceding chapter, on the teacher's role of challenger, emphasized this significant function.

Furthermore, no skilled teacher is so permissive that a pupil does precisely what he pleases when he pleases. There are realities which both teacher and pupils must recognize, no matter how they feel about them. There is a school; there are laws which make school attendance compulsory; there are school curriculums for which teachers and pupils are responsible. There are classes, often large ones, made up of pupils who come from heterogeneous backgrounds, have a wide range of interests and abilities, and lack in-

terest in much of their school work. There are many kinds of rules which children cannot easily understand and do not accept but which must, nevertheless, be observed and enforced if there is to be an effective school administration. The teaching \in learning process does not take place in a book or in a dream world. It occurs in the American school system today.

Again, some kind of learning does occur under pressure imposed by others. This may not be the most effective learning. Indeed, it is probably harmful in many respects. There is, so to speak, negative learning. The pupils learn how to avoid responsible learning. They learn how to avoid threatening situations. They learn how to submit, resentfully, to authority instead of being encouraged to challenge it.

On the other hand, what may have little meaning at the time may become more meaningful in other and later contexts. A child may rebel against being compelled to "learn" the multiplication table, but, in time, the ability to deal with problems of numbers may be appreciated. Let us not overlook, however, the blocks to personality development that may accompany this kind of "pressured" learning.

We have attempted to present the nature of genuine, significant learning. We are aware of the many kinds of obstacles which block the setting in which this kind of constructive, positive learning can take place. Every teacher must take into account the conditions and limitations which she finds but which she cannot control. She will not appreciate how to evaluate the limitations unless and until she recognizes which limitations are external and which obstacles she can overcome. This is not possible until she possesses a clear understanding of the personal nature of learning.

# Problems for Discussion

1. A pupil, faced with an impending examination, feels that he should spend the evening studying for the test. His friends urge him to attend a movie. He, too, wants to go to the movie but

repeats, "I ought to study." He decides on the movie. Did he do what he wanted to do?

A wife asks her husband whether he wants to go to the movies. The husband had planned to spend a relaxing evening reading the newspaper. If he replies, "No," to his wife's request, there will be a long-drawn-out argument. He replies, "I'd love to go. What's playing?" They go. Did the husband do what he wanted to do?

Does every individual always do what he wants to do? Is this question different from the question "Why does an individual make the decision he makes?"

What bearing has your answer on the will-to-learn?

- 2. We have stated that all genuine learning involves some degree of disturbance. Suppose one "learns" to enjoy a Beethoven quartet; what kind of disturbance is involved, if any? Give an example of anything you have learned which does not involve some disturbance. (Bear in mind that learning, if genuine, requires some degree of reorganization of attitudes, feelings, and behavior.)
- 3. Do you see any connection between the large circulation of magazines and books which purport to guide parents in raising their children and the parents' guilt as to the way in which they are guiding their children?
- 4. Frequently, after a discussion with parent groups, the writer has been asked such questions as "My six-year-old did so and so. What should I say or do?" Invariably the writer replied, "I don't know. It all depends." Depends upon what?
- 5. What "principles," in your opinion or judgment, operate in helping pupils to become more responsible?
  - 6. Can a person learn to become "creative"?
  - 7. Are there times when you do not like to be praised? Why?
  - 8. Can you learn from the experience of others?

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# The Measurement and the Quality of Learning

What Is Being Evaluated?
What Is Being Evaluated?
What Should Be Evaluated?
The Problem of Evaluation
What Do the Students Say?
Self-discovery
Self-motivation
Translating Ideas
Identification
Supervision
Problems for Discussion

HE PROBLEM OF EVALUATING the performance of pupils is an old one. For many teachers and pupils, it remains unsolved. We believe that some of the perplexing aspects of evaluation will be clarified through an analysis of the assumptions underlying present evaluation procedures. We shall be concerned with the following three problems:

- 1. What standards are used in present evaluations?
- 2. What is being evaluated?
- 3. What should be evaluated?

Many schools are experimenting with newer evaluation techniques. We believe, however, that the analysis which follows is relevant to the procedures now employed by the majority of schools in this country.

#### What Standards Are Used?

The device most generally used for judging a student's performance is the written or oral examination. Numerical or letter grade ratings indicate the standing of the pupil. The record of class attendance and the written assignments are included in the grade or are supplementary indexes. The examination is the standard index for all the members of a class. The passing grade represents a statistical average. The performance of all the members of a particular class is commonly plotted on a Gaussian, or normal distribution, curve, with the majority of the pupils achieving an average rating of C (65-75 or 70-80) and with a minority falling above or below the mean rating.

Whether such a standard is determined by the average performance of any specific class or externally determined by the examiner, an altogether gratuitous assumption is made. The normal distribution curve can be applied successfully to physical data when it is proper to assume that a sufficiently large sample is a cross section of an infinite series of isolated traits that are being measured. But the application of the normal distribution curve to the complex data of human learning is another matter. It is questionable whether any group of ten or one hundred or one thousand pupils represents a homogeneous cross section of an infinite number of pupils. Naturally, if what is being tested is one's knowledge of isolated data, such as the sum of 12 + 12, it can be assumed that, given similar instruction for similar periods of time, any random group of one thousand third-grade pupils will, with a high probability, perform as successfully as any other group. The important question is: What is being tested?

Suppose pupil A receives a grade of 100 in an arithmetic examination and pupil B receives a grade of 50 in the same examination. Can one say that A knows twice as much arithmetic as B? Such a statement is obviously absurd. A knowledge of arithmetic is not an additive quality. It is an intensive, not an extensive, quality. With regard to all intensive qualities, such as intelligence, musical talent, maturity, shape, taste, and morality, questions regarding how much are utterly meaningless. If learning is essentially an intensive quality, what is being measured? This leads us to the second area of investigation.

#### What Is Being Evaluated?

Let us return to the examination in arithmetic. If pupil B scores only 50 and pupil A 100, does B's score represent no knowledge, which deserves an "F" rating, or failure, whereas A's score indicates perfect knowledge, which warrants an "A"? Or does B know how to solve problems at one level of difficulty and A at another level—and what are these "levels"? Or can B work only half as fast in a given time as A? Or are many other intangible factors concealed by the examination grades? What is being tested?

School examinations are commonly of the true-false, multiple-choice, matching, or essay type. Presumably they test the pupil's knowledge. Does knowledge consist in correctly matching an alphabetical list of authors with a series of book titles? Does it consist in

supplying the correct dates for specific events in history? Is it revealed by differentiating true from false statements about the human anatomy?

Such examinations are generally concerned with testing the pupil's ability to memorize and recall, at stated intervals, a miscellaneous array of data which some authority considers significant (for whom, when, why?). In terms of performance, one might suppose that schools are training people to play parlor guessing games or to participate in commercial quiz programs. Pupils gather information, which they are taught to supply on demand by an expert, or quiz master. The "average" curriculum, on all levels of education, consists almost entirely of some teacher's answers to problems seldom raised by the pupils.

From the point of view of, let us say, the sophomore in high school, would it make any essential difference in the present curriculum whether he were required to "know" the distribution of minerals in the United States, the mass of Saturn, the routes of the early American explorers, or the names and telephone numbers under letter "A" in his local telephone directory? \* Under present arrangements, the teachers plan to test the units they have decided to present before they even meet with their classes. They know in advance the ends they want achieved.

Throughout this book we have pointed out that knowledge is not to be confused with learning. Information cannot have import

\* Compare the boredom of a fourteen- or fifteen-year-old high-school boy preparing for an examination on important dates of early discoveries on the American continent with the alacrity and excitement with which he will quote the daily standings of major-league ball teams. This phenomenon remains a puzzle to many women teachers.

A college senior spent an entire year meeting once a week with his instructor studying Talcott Parsons' book The Structure of Society. He majored in sociology and passed the "comprehensive" examination. In addition, he submitted a required paper on his study of Parsons' volume. Three years later, the instructor met him at an informal gathering and casually inquired, "How is Parsons getting along?" The student, then an executive in an advertising agency, inquired, after a few moments of reflection, "Parsons? Parsons? We haven't any client by that name."

It may be that the student had changed. In light of our experience with students we incline to the view that the trouble lies in the teaching \iff learning process.

unless it is assimilated into the "being" of the pupil. Education is a process which emphasizes bringing into existence that which does not yet exist. It is primarily concerned not with what one knows but with what one becomes.

Individual pupils acquire insight on different levels. The rate, quality, and range of learning, and the rate of assimilation of facts, will differ for every pupil. Facts, to be meaningful, must be seen in relation to the problems of the pupil and to his behavior. Teachers who accept this orientation will find evaluation no easy task. The change-over from the traditional examination, which covers prearranged goals and predigested materials, to an evaluation of the experience that the pupil is undergoing requires that the examiner believe in a different set of educational outcomes. This leads us to the third problem.

#### What Should Be Evaluated?

As we have seen, most school examinations emphasize discrete data which authorities in a subject consider to be significant. The authorities in any given field have assimilated a common body of knowledge. There is agreement on the facts. The criterion for judging what one knows, the amount or accumulation of data, is external to the learner. One knows or does not know the agreed-upon facts. An objective test reveals the pupil's knowledge of what are the agreed-upon facts.

If, on the other hand, learning and education consist in some respects of the development of meaningful contexts of data in the pupils' own lives, then different criteria seem to be required. At the extreme, if individuals are immutably different, if each one learns what he wants to learn, what he can afford to learn, or what he needs to learn, no general criteria can be applied. The performance of a specific pupil cannot be compared and ranked according to the performance of other pupils. The meaning of any course to each individual can be determined only by that individual. If we ask, "What did the course or the facts mean to you?" we see clearly

the difficulty in judging performance by external standards. Inevitably, the evaluation must rest on the achievement of the student in accord with his capacities, needs, and interests.

#### The Problem of Evaluation

The dilemma of evaluation can now be formulated: are we to evaluate what the pupil knows or what and how he learns? Actually, of course, both types of evaluation are important, and they are interrelated. Testing the what is the general objective of examinations in our schools. There are social realities, commonly accepted data, values, meanings, which everyone must acquire for orderly community living. Critical thinking cannot be achieved without data. Content cannot be disregarded.

The danger, however, is that we become ritualistic in evaluating knowledge, disregarding and failing in humanity and wisdom. There is a spurious sense of comfort and convenience in having everyone "learn" the same data in the same way at the same time, in everyone's acquiring the mechanical ability to insert the correct coins of information into mental slot machines. This sense of comfort is all the more spurious when lip service is paid to the goal of giving every child the opportunity to develop his capacities, his needs. The individual needs to assimilate social realities, but not at too great a cost to self-motivation, self-education, and self-responsibility. These values are denied in school practice as often as they are affirmed in educational theory.

There is need for balance, a better balance, to reconcile the clashing goals of education. We need to develop more effective methods of encouraging "organic" learning and growth and new ways of evaluating such developments. The kind of evaluation we have in mind, interestingly enough, is employed most frequently in the conferring of graduate degrees. Under ideal conditions, the candidate for a higher degree defines a problem, gathers data, makes his interpretations, and then discusses what he has learned with the committee in charge of the examination. The committee

members discuss the candidate's record and performance. They accredit him for the degree or they do not. In the reputable graduate schools it is the quality of the work and the quality of the candidate's "performance" that is judged. Graduate students are assumed to be a special kind of people who warrant more individual attention. Students in secondary schools and in colleges tend to be regarded as ciphers, to be lectured at *en masse* and then tested by statistical devices—appropriate for "masses."

It is obviously impossible for teachers of large classes to give each of their students as much time as in small graduate seminars. But size of classes and available time are not the whole story. The orientation of the teacher and pupil regarding educational objectives is the important factor in evaluation.

The educational outcome will vary for every pupil. It is the qualitative aspect of an ongoing experience which needs evaluation by both pupil and teacher. The evaluation itself becomes an important experience, perhaps the most important one, to enrich the growth experience of the pupil—and of the teacher. With such evaluation the learner is inside his most important learning experience, participating, with the guidance of his teacher, in interpreting what is happening to him. Together they contribute to the improvement of the learning process by exploring how to make the pupil's experience richer and, eventually, more satisfying.1 Here is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to help the pupil learn how to improve learning, how to assume responsibility for his decisions, and how to select and manage his own affairs. Here is a total situation involving knowledge or the absence of it, psychological blocks, resistances, interests, needs, skills, and a teacher willing to help. In the evaluation conference, the pupil's purpose and motivation can be crystallized. There is no threat, disesteem, humiliation, or competitiveness. There is an opportunity to participate in redirecting one's experience so that a more satisfying integration may be experienced.

The present tests for success in the classroom measure different outcomes from those proposed in this study. The objectives of education, we have maintained, are not the mere acquisition of subject

matter, such as geography, social science, algebra, and so on. This content may become a means for the growth of a pupil if it makes a real difference in the way in which he meets problems. Ideally, the primary and secondary schools are concerned with aiding young people to achieve a quality of life, not merely to gain knowledge of undigested abstractions. If we believe this, we must contrive a different procedure to evaluate the success of this goal. This kind of growth cannot be measured by yardsticks devised for testing the traditional subject matters.

If the education of pupils rather than the teaching of content becomes the proper concern of teachers, more attention will be given to students' motivation, to the kind of effort they make in class participation and in written work, to the degree of initiative, the intensity of curiosity, and the willingness to assume responsibility. Teachers will, consequently, encourage students to think critically, to use data in their own way, and to give import to what they know. For these purposes we need new types of examinations which will elicit not inert ideas and specious "facts" but meaningful contexts. What a student has learned cannot then be separated from what he has learned.

Many new devices will have to be discovered to help in this kind of evaluation. A cumulative record of the pupil's performance will be basic. It will contain a description of how interest arose, how it was pursued and developed, the relations of the pupil to others, the record of contributions to the group, new ideas or projects proposed, specific instances of self-assumed responsibility and self-discipline.

A class of pupils would gain much from devising their own examinations with the guidance of the teacher and participating in their evaluations of one another. Working through this kind of experience would involve the vital participation of every pupil. The spirit would be not one of jealous competition for status but one of mutual help toward one another to understand what each has been doing and what each needs to do.

Specious grades and hollow examinations will, in time, be

considered educational monstrosities (as, in the judgment of anyone familiar with genuine growth of personality, they are).

#### What Do the Students Say?

The remainder of this chapter will present several evaluations by members of our seminars. The evaluations arose spontaneously—that is, they were not made in the context of any course grade or in response to any questions of the leader of the groups. The general theme of the meetings was the improvement of teaching skills. The reader may feel that it is almost impossible to judge the value of these seminars by what the students say, that it would be more accurate to ask the students specific questions and to examine their answers. But actually the student can better evaluate the significance of the meetings to and for him than the teacher.

Other readers may wonder whether the theme of the meetings, the improvement of teaching skills, is not exceptional in that it does not lend itself to the kind of specific question-answer examination to which all of us are accustomed. How, they may ask, could a similar evaluation be used in elementary algebra? The writer was visiting a high school in South Carolina at the close of the first semester and was present at the algebra examination. The instructor was explaining to me the significance of the students' moving about the room, huddling together in groups of two, three, and four. The pupils were helping one another to understand and to solve the examination questions. The instructor explained that he was certain that, after an hour or so, every one of the thirty pupils would understand the principles involved in the solutions of the problems. He added that most teachers would consider what was happening as outlandish cheating. He thought it was a form of highly desirable cooperation. Learning to work together, to cooperate, to achieve self-esteem, he felt, was the important outcome of the elementary algebra class. The tool of algebra was a means of helping the pupils develop as people and, incidentally, become

genuinely interested in mathematics, because it meant more to them than the risk and fear of "flunking" the teacher's or school's examination. Algebra became associated with friendliness, helpfulness, opportunities to express creativity, freedom to make mistakes without penalty or disapproval. In this atmosphere, pupil responsibility for perseverance and working through to an understanding of the problems is self-imposed. Algebra becomes a challenge, not a threat.

In this example, the content of the course on which all pupils were being examined was external, uniform, and probably unrelated to the real needs of some of the members of the class. Some of the members of this group were preparing for careers in a textile plant and probably had some interest in mathematics, which is used in designing textile machinery. Let us grant, however, that the majority was not keenly interested. The reality situation required that they "learn" the algebra, and neither pupils nor teacher could change that given fact. The problem was how best to help the pupils meet the situation. This teacher certainly created an atmosphere which was highly unorthodox. By trying to remove the feeling of threat which ordinarily accompanies examinations, by encouraging the more advanced pupils to help those less prepared, he undoubtedly encouraged many pupils to make a positive effort to understand what the problems involved. It is likely that the pupils in this class might develop a more genuine interest in mathematics than would the students in the usual course in high-school mathematics taught in the traditional manner. Apart from the content, the class was used to develop personal traits of the students.

Professor Ralph W. Tyler, of the University of Chicago, has suggested that teachers must work out an educational philosophy explicitly, that they must carefully examine and scrutinize their objectives.<sup>2</sup> In effect, this is the problem with which all of us are concerned. We have, in this book, noted something of the basic purpose of teaching and learning in the primary and secondary schools. What occurs when one becomes aware of what enters into skilled teaching and meaningful learning? If the teacher becomes more aware of classroom atmosphere, of her function, of the use

she makes of her own creative difference, of the nature of individual synthesis—in short, if the teacher's sensitivity and perceptivity of the teaching \interpretate learning process are deepened and enlarged—what happens to her and, hence, to her educational philosophy? She is likely to become better motivated in assuming responsibility for her own development. She strives to translate the ideas and concepts into professional and personal practice. She identifies more easily with her pupils. She is eager for professional supervision. She is more ready to accept the inevitable conflict which accompanies genuine growth.

The net result of these expanding insights is a quality of creative learning heretofore rarely experienced. The excerpts which follow reflect some of the changes which took place in the seminars. There would be no value in specifying the particular time in the course of the specific individual contexts which stimulated the students and led them to whatever insights they attained. This is an individual matter, which only the student, if anyone, could describe.\*

#### Self-discovery

HELEN: We teachers, products of teacher-training institutes, aren't sure of what we are doing because our whole teacher-training program has required us to be students and not teachers. I say "whole" even though there is a program of student teaching. All that a student-teaching experience does for a student is permit the opportunity to observe and later to mimic the mannerisms, ideas, and practices of a teacher. The student is not a teacher by virtue of student teaching. He is a student who has had an experience. Being a teacher involves a certainty of your orientation within yourself. And, until you in-

<sup>\*</sup> See, however, pp. 135, 138, 162, 183-184, 243, and 253.

stinctively percieve the difference between being a student and being a teacher, you are still a student.

My graduate training in education will be over this spring, and not until these meetings has my attention been brought to the wholly different thinking and feeling orientations appropriate to teachers and students. Why did it take so long? I should have had these insights before I ever went out on a student-teaching assignment.

I am convinced that teacher education should be reorganized so that people who have all their lives been practicing the disciplines of students can examine that process [of being a student] into which they have most likely drifted unawares, find out what it involves for them, and then examine the meaning of teaching, find out how, why, and in what orientations it differs from being a student, and then have the major part of teacher training devoted to clinical experience under good supervision, as we've had here.

HILDA: I think most of us now agree that the curriculum is something to be experienced rather than something to be learned. The majority of us in the early meetings defended the viewpoint that the curriculum is something to be learned rather than something to be experienced. I think we were defensive. We were defending ourselves, not a viewpoint. What I do want to bring out is that here was a group which at first thoroughly believed that it had a direct hand in controlling how the students would use the knowledge, what they would learn, and, thus, what the outcomes would be.

Going back to the training of teachers in the institutions with which I am acquainted, I can see that this erroneous thinking about curriculum is prevalent. Emerging teachers are drilled in this, directly and indirectly. Much of it is misconceived by us because we're not given the opportunity to become really involved in our education.

GREGORY: Now that our sessions are coming to a close, I am able to understand my own reactions to this type of meeting. In

the beginning I had the feeling that we had solved nothing when our sessions ended. Everything was left up in the air. It has been apparent all along, however, that I do some of my most vital thinking during the fifty-minute ride home after our classes. I'm always so wound up after discussions that the car radio isn't turned on, even for the news—something I've always done. I am sure that I acquire some insights immediately after our discussions—as an outgrowth of our discussions. This is a novel experience. In the past, in other classes, after the usual lecture or discussion I may have continued to hash over material with one or two other persons, but never have I kept mulling it over myself. The stuff keeps me from sleeping.

JIM: Let's take the last half hour to see if we can evaluate what has happened here. I, for one, think that one of the most important things is that we have dropped a great many of our pretensions. What strikes me most of all is the difference between our first four or five meetings and the last three meetings. The first part of the season we were talking aimlessly, intellectualizing, and trying to run away from the real problem. And in the last few weeks, we stopped talking generally and have gotten involved in our own feeling—what we do in the classroom and how we get rid of our tensions by taking it out on the children. To me that is the most important part.

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Helen, Hilda, Gregory, and Jim call attention to their own involvement in the classroom experience. Hilda states simply and directly, "We're not given the opportunity to become really involved in our education." Helen comments on the same point somewhat differently. "Being a teacher involves a certainty of your orientation within yourself." Gregory declares, "This is a novel experience . . . never have I kept mulling it [the material] over by myself." Jim states, "We stopped talking generally and have

gotten involved in our own feeling." The students are engaged in the discovery of a teaching self, and they seem to find it vital.

#### Self-motivation

JIM: I am convinced that listening to lectures is almost altogether a waste of time. You go in, you take notes, you listen, and you come out and nothing happens. Here I have been challenged. I've tried to meet the challenge in my own small way. I know there is movement of some kind taking place in me.

ELIZABETH: I know that I have built a little something with my kids this year and I'll ask the administration to allow me to have that same class next year because having freed them from fear of authority a little bit I want to go on and see how I can use this next year with the same group so I don't have to start all over again.

JERRY: I realize tonight that we are about, or at least I am about, ready to start. I've just got a toe hold in my thinking. Certainly, a lot of problems which I never thought I had have now come out.

I think we've jumped into the water and find it cold, and we want to complain. But if we're going to learn how to swim, I guess we've got to be in the water.

LEWIS: I certainly don't feel as though I understand this new kind of teaching well enough to go out and do it. But I certainly am going to try to do something different in my classes from what I've been doing.

NED: I think I can illustrate something along this line. Most of you may have noticed in the last few weeks that I have spoken less than I had at the beginning. I think what's happening is that I've gotten enough insight to deal with some of the problems I meet with in school and I don't need the group any more to try and run away from my own problems and depend

upon you for the answers. Whatever I do, I've got to do on my own.

CARL: What interests me, now, is how we can help our pupils in a classroom. But I think no one can answer this for me. I've certainly learned that I've got to answer it myself. The fact that we've met here has given me something to start with and work on.

INSTRUCTOR: I think Carl has said something which all of us now have a full realization of. We can do an awful lot for ourselves if we want to, once we have had certain horizons revealed to us—that is, having gotten some help, we can go on and help ourselves.

Jim, Elizabeth, Jerry, Lewis, Ned, and Carl have all been challenged and are now ready to challenge themselves. Each one is motivated to assume the responsibility for doing something different in the classroom. They begin to realize that learning involves more than passive listening or perfunctory talking. They discern that they must become more than intellectually involved in a genuine learning experience. Courage, fear, risk, and uncertainty accompany growth. The motivation, the drive to learn, must, in the final analysis, come from the learner.

#### Translating Ideas

A teacher can never foretell what students are going to do with ideas, how the concepts are going to affect them. That will depend, as we have seen, on the kind of synthesis the individual makes for himself. Here are a few excerpts indicating the various ways in which some of the seminar members translated the ideas discussed.

JIM: I don't quite know how it took place, but I know that even in my home my wife has commented upon my changed be-

havior, and she doesn't understand why and neither do I. We both felt that something has changed me.

ELIZABETH: I certainly have been helped in a great many of my personal problems apart from the schoolroom because of our meetings here. I am aware of a great many things which I never suspected before.

I am doing to the students in a way which never occurred to me before. I am a bit more careful in what I say to the students and I try to listen to them more, and that goes for my fellow teachers, too. Instead of criticizing a teacher before he finishes saying what he wants to say, I say to myself, "Don't criticize until you understand what he is trying to say."

Some of the kids in my dramatics class who talk back to me now are surprised at what I take. In fact, I think I've gone too far the other way. I've gotten a different idea of what "respect" for a teacher means. One of the kids said to another kid who "talked back" to me today, "Look, don't you ever want to go to college? You better watch your step," and everybody laughed. The kids now make a point of differing with me, knowing that I'll take it. The kids in my class, when I talk to them about this, tell me that in all their classes they are afraid to differ with the teacher. And some of my fellow teachers have been asking me what I've been doing, since they find that their students are beginning to question them and not agree with them. The kids also tell me, when I ask them, that they engage in a tremendous amount of applepolishing to get good grades, which, of course, is something all of us know. What interests me, though, is the frankness with which the kids tell me about it. I guess they trust me more now, since I listen more and criticize less.

NANCY: I have found that there has been a carry-over in my relations with other people on the campus and in my social relations. I'm more outspoken and act much more independently than ever before in my life.

STANLEY: What strikes me is the difference between our meetings

and the classes I've taken in the college. The same ideas were there, the books were there, but I never understood the concepts, or maybe I should say, I never felt them the way I feel them now. Now every day in the classroom I'm aware—painfully aware—of the bad things that I am doing. In a sense, I'm much worse off than I was before. Now I am not satisfied, and before I was. For the first time, the ideas we've been grappling with have become part of me, or rather, I should say, are becoming a part of me. There certainly is a big difference between having an idea and having an idea hit you.

wanted to put in. But here we're deprived of the books, and neither you nor the group opposes what I have to say. I have to become involved, whether I like it or not. You become responsible for your position. You can't by-pass yourself. You've got to do something.

Jim, Elizabeth, and Nancy report changes in their behavior in their personal life. There has been some kind of a "carry-over," as Nancy puts it. Lawrence criticizes less and listens more. Stanley expresses clearly the experience of translating an idea by stating, "The ideas we've been grappling with have become part of me. There is a big difference between having an idea and having an idea hit you."

#### Identification

Fear of authority and of social disapproval, we have emphasized, blocks the expression of difference. A friendly, warm, understanding atmosphere lessens such fear and leads to a different quality of learning experience. The learner does not have to become or remain defensive, since no one insists on a point of view and, hence, the

learner does not feel threatened. Assured of understanding, he can more easily assume the risks of difference. The comments which follow support this view.

NANCY: What amazes me is that here we are, a group of twelve people who were perfect strangers the first night we met. Yet we've been able to develop such friendly understanding with regard to each other in a few weeks' time. There certainly is no group I have ever been in where I feel so relaxed and comfortable and don't feel called upon to pretend to be something I'm not. In our group I have so much more courage in saying my piece and not running away than I usually had. I've noticed, too, that in my own classes the pupils are participating more and more. Maybe they've noticed a change in my attitude toward them.

CARL: I think the movement of this group has been largely due to our leader.

INSTRUCTOR: Carl, what makes you say that? What light does what you say throw on the learning process?

CARL: Well, I think it depends on the techniques you use and your own feelings about us. I have felt all through the last few meetings that you and the others have understood my problems. As a matter of fact, I think you have seen my problems and felt them even more keenly than I have.

PHILIP: I think all of us have gone through a lot of the things that I'm going through now. And it has helped me to become conscious of many problems which I never recognized before.

You've got to understand yourself before you understand the pupils. Also the teacher should try very hard not to fight against the pupil but to help him to fight for himself. You stood by during our meetings as we struggled with you and you didn't fight back; you helped us to fight with ourselves. I guess that's what we've been calling the permissive atmosphere.

#### Supervision

The teacher who has experienced the satisfaction which accompanies genuine growth and more skilled classroom performance is eager for professional help. It is the fairly skilled teacher who becomes conscious of lacking high skill, who is dissatisfied and wants help. This can be seen from such comments as the following.

MABEL: I should like to ask a direct question. How can those of us who want to develop more skill in teaching be helped?

JIM: I think we have to have some kind of skilled supervision. I am now convinced that we ought to have supervisors who can do this.

JERRY: But we don't have.

cora: It seems to me that, now that we are alerted, here and there we will find people on different levels of insight with whom we can talk about these things. In supervision, if we look around, there certainly must be a few people who are skilled in their understanding so that we might supervise and help each other.

JERRY: The danger in that is that we will find friends rather than professional helpers.

LILA: You have no idea how many people would have been glad to come to these meetings, to these discussions, if they had known about it. The interest certainly is there. What we need is to set up areas where we can get this kind of help, either in or out of the schools.

HARRY: We should have more of this in more teachers' colleges. We read books, we read books, and we read books. And we don't begin to understand much of what is in the books, assuming that they are good books. I think you have to be guided and live through the experience that the books talk about.

MABEL: I am utterly convinced that the one great need is to have skilled supervisors meeting with teachers every week. I have certainly taken that idea away with me from our discussions here in the last few months.

cora: We have the supervisors now, but I'm afraid they're not prepared to perform the functions we are speaking of.

visors in the same way that we've been helped. I have a feeling that our leader is doing much more by way of guiding us, that he is not at all nondirective. He seems to watch us for potentialities of growth and introduces points of view at such times when we seem able to follow what he is saying. I think that, without the kind of close guidance we've had here, it is almost hopeless to expect teachers to learn about real teaching.

CORA: I certainly think there is a lot more to this than meets the ear. I would feel very inadequate to go out and try to help a group of other teachers, or any group, for that matter. I don't think I have sufficient skill yet to know what to do with my tensions. I'd probably use the group for my own needs and miss the boat. I'm sure, however, that as a result of these meetings I have increased my understanding of the way in which teachers and family groups and students operate. Even though I might not be skilled in leading them, I certainly have more insight into what operates when people get together. To become really competent, I feel, I'd have to have personal supervision or, at least, more of the kind of discussions we've been having here.

NED: That leads me to say that every teachers' group should have a professional leader who understands what happens when an individual or group learns. I don't think there can be any substitute for that kind of help.

A few days after this meeting Ned presented a written statement of what the discussion had meant to him. It summarizes and illustrates clearly what we mean by the quality of learning. The last meeting shocked me into finding the basis for many of my teaching problems. There were several revelations. The first of these was an understanding of the will-guilt cycle,\* something which had threatened my entire status as a teacher. As a believer in the "new" education, I offered my children a degree of freedom which they had never before experienced in school, our school staff and administration being extremely traditional. Since these children lacked such experience, their reactions were not always "orderly" ones, and I often found myself shouting at them and removing this "freedom" completely. Then, of course, came the feelings of guilt over what I had done. Such a cycle occurred often, and I now realize that it was I, not the children, who was really at fault. My feelings of guilt brought about a feeling of inadequacy.

Before attempting to solve a problem, one must know what that problem consists of. Our previous discussions explained the will-guilt cycle and showed me how fear of losing control of the class, behind which was fear of my principal and supervisors, behind which was my own sense of inadequacy, kept me from granting my children real freedom—real in the sense that they could develop for themselves an understanding of what freedom in education means and how it could be utilized. The guilt stemmed from the knowledge that suppression on my part was depriving the children of what my logical mind knew they should have, and what my frightened mind was afraid to let them have. By exchanging the muddled, confused understanding of this problem for a clear, conscious explanation, I can lay the foundation for a different approach toward my pupils.

Directly related to this is the concept of limitations. One of our group, Mabel, found her attempts to help one of her children limited by her school administration. The teacher had tried to do all she could do under the circumstances, but the feeling that more could be accomplished constantly disturbed her. Our group hotly debated this situation, and we were led to an understanding of limitations, of what a teacher can do—and of what he cannot be expected to do. Still, I felt that if I were better equipped I would be able to push farther and farther away that wall of limitations, and I continued to feel guilt and inadequacy.

At this point, I found myself in a state of confusion once again. However, it was not confusion caused by a hopeless blank. It was confusion brought about by ideas circling about and readying themselves for a safe, logical landing. Ideas, concepts were whirling around but getting ready to jell into an intelligent and vital understanding.

Now, instead of hating myself for these inadequacies, or trying to repress knowledge of their existence, I realized that I must learn to live with them, learn to accept myself as I am, and at the same time, constantly seek improvement. Here is the solution, or the key to the solution, of my problem, of my feelings of guilt, of my sincere desire to improve myself as a teacher. I now understand the will-guilt cycle and why I suppress my children even though I am ethically and emotionally opposed to suppression. I also know that I am not wholly to blame for my actions, and that there are limitations outside of my immediate control along with my inadequacies. I no longer condemn myself, or try not to, for these inadequacies, for I know I must accept myself as I am. But, above all, I realize that I am now able to work toward doing away with my inadequacies and correcting those teaching faults that are my own doing. I am able to do this through a new understanding of the genesis and nature of the entire problem.

Above everything else, I am developing a feeling of security as a teacher which I never had before. I no longer feel confused with regard to the teaching problems I mentioned, nor do I feel disgusted with myself any more, though there still are moments when I regress. Instead, my energies are headed in a positive direction, the direction of continuous self-improvement through understanding myself and my problems.

Already, my teaching has benefited from our group discussions. Freedom to work as my conscience dictates has become the rule in my classroom. Yet the children are now aware of the limitations imposed on us, and we all are trying to continue our work but to adapt it to these bounds whenever we see them before us. And, equally important, when I do detect an error in my ways, I do not devote all of my energies to self-condemnation. Instead, I try to see it as a means to improvement. My

great hope is that this process will continue, with more and more of my powers directed toward the understanding of why I do things as I do, toward ways and means of improving myself so that I will not repeat the things I do not wish to repeat, and less and less of my energies devoted to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and self-condemnation which lead nowhere. Now I can use my dissatisfaction to help myself instead of blaming others.

No reader is likely to entertain more skepticism than the author regarding the genuine changes which have occurred. More than a quarter of a century of teaching has taught him how very very difficult it is to change basic attitudes. If anything, it is noteworthy that within a period of one semester the seminar participants reached a point of being able to articulate, to crystallize into language, modified points of view. To practice what they say is quite another kind of achievement.

What may be fairly concluded, however, is that if candidates for teaching were products of a school system and teachers' colleges where the teaching \iff learning process we have been concerned with was typical of all or the majority of classes, they would be what they now say they are.

In any event, the *intellectual* awareness of the problems of teaching and learning is one step forward. This much, we feel, had been accomplished. How the several teachers will put to use their respective awareness is a problem each has to deal with in light of his own private and school experience.

#### Problems for Discussion

- 1. The temperature reading in a living room is 60° F. The wife complains, "It's frightfully warm in the room." The husband reads the thermometer and comments drily, "It can't be. The temperature is 60 degrees." The wife retorts, "I tell you, the room is hot!" Whose judgment is sound?
  - 2. A pupil being interviewed concerning his poor class work

states, "I'm honestly doing the best I can, Miss Axe." The teacher declares, "But your work is not up to the class standard." Is the pupil or the teacher failing in performance?

3. One often hears such comments as "Heifetz is a greater violinist than Szigetti," or "Bach is a finer musician than Brahms."

What is meant by "greater" and "finer"?

- 4. Can what one learns be separated from how one learns?
- 5. "The habit of art is the habit of enjoying vivid values," wrote A. N. Whitehead. What factors make up the "habit of art"?
- 6. Can you learn through listening to a formal classroom lecture?
  - 7. How does one motivate oneself?
- 8. Every genuine idea ends in muscle, gland, and viscera. Do you agree with this statement?
- 9. What is the difference between being identified with someone and becoming identified?
- 10. What factors enter into skilled supervision of a candidate for teaching?
  - 11. What do you experience when you feel "guilty"?
- 12. Can there be any kind of efficient organization without limitations?

#### Selected Bibliography

Whitehead, Alfred North. Science in the Modern World. New York: Macmillan Co., 1948. "Wisdom is the fruit of a balanced development. It is this balanced growth of individuality which it should be the aim of education to serve. . . . Sensitiveness without impulse spells decadence and impulse without sensitiveness spells brutality. . . . The habit of art is the habit of enjoying vivid values" (pp. 247-300). This volume by the well-known philosopher and mathematician was first published in 1926 as the Lowell Lectures delivered in 1925 at Harvard University. Whitehead shows how the mentality of an epoch reflects the view of the

world dominant in the educated sections of the community. Chapters IX-XI, on science and philosophy, abstraction, and God, respectively, will be of especial interest to the reader.

<sup>2</sup>The Measurement of Understanding. National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946. This study calls attention to the need for evaluating understanding as well as facts and skills. Practical suggestions are presented.

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#### Part III

### NEW LIGHT IN TEACHING

#### Chapter Ten

## Toward a New Teacher

The Moral View of Self
Modern Insight into Self
The Polarity of the Self
Independence-Dependence
Conflict of Wills
Will-Guilt
Resistance
Identification
Toward a New Teacher
Problems for Discussion

NED: I feel that I have acquired a technique for self-exploration, an exploration that is releasing a great deal of the creative powers that I feel have been dormant too long.

HE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING can be improved through self-understanding. In a very real sense, every competent psychiatrist and professional social worker is a teacher. Most psychiatrists, and every psychoanalyst, must undergo a didactic analysis as a prerequisite for certification. That is to say, the candidate must live through, in his own treatment, the kinds of experiences his future clients will undergo. He acquires self-understanding through the intensive hours he spends with the supervising psychiatrist or psychoanalyst.

Similarly, every certified social worker has had extended supervision before graduation and continues to be supervised for a time after graduation while working with clients. The chief aim of this supervision is to aid the social worker in gaining insight into professional use he or she can make of himself in relation to the clients.

In both cases—that of the psychiatrist and of the professional social worker—there is an extended subject matter which must be intellectually acquired. There are various areas of knowledge making up the curriculum of study. It is universally recognized, however, that the knowledge aspects of these professions are only the intellectual prerequisites. One of the most significant parts of professional development is the translation of the concepts into meaningful, organic, personal experiences. Hence, the vis á vis supervision.

Teachers are not psychiatrists or social workers. Their function is not to deal with distortions of personality or mental illness or to administer the services of social-work agencies. They are being prepared to teach. In all three professions, however, there is a common factor—namely, one person is *professionally helping* another

person or persons. In order to understand best how to help people, whatever the focus of the help, one has to appreciate professionally what is involved in offering and in receiving such help. The teacher, too, must have the opportunity to translate her intellectual framework into a meaningful organic experience.

Being a person involves understanding people. Understanding people involves understanding oneself. Understanding how to help people professionally depends upon a professional understanding of oneself. How does the professional self-understanding of a teacher differ from the ordinary view of self possessed by the layman? What insights will the "new teacher" possess?

This chapter attempts to contribute an answer to the question. First, a contrast is made, in broad outline, between the common, everyday moral view of self and the mental-hygienic view of self. Then we shall examine, in greater detail, some of the dynamisms involved in learning, such as the polarity of self (ambivalence), the need to express oneself as well as the need to be like others, the inevitable conflict which occurs before balances are discovered, and the guilt, resistance, and identification we experience in the process of balancing our different needs.

An awareness of such dynamisms and continued classroom practice guided by these insights are likely to lead to increasingly effective teaching and learning.

#### The Moral View of Self

The average adult acquires his view of self from his family and friends during early childhood and adolescence. The school, church, "comics," national magazines, newspapers, movies, radio, and television incorporate and support the widely shared views of what characterizes an industrious, respectable, God-fearing, solid citizen.

Children, in accord with the middle-class values of this country, are taught to be obedient, honest, respectful, kind, cooperative, and sympathetic. The "good" child is one who develops these qualities.

The "bad" child is disobedient, dishonest, disrespectful, cruel, uncooperative, and unsympathetic. The good child is rewarded; the bad child is punished.

The traditional beliefs about man's nature, his self, have been passed on through the centuries in theological doctrine and dogma. It has been assumed that man is born in sin but that he can be saved. His flesh and his bodily appetites are evil, but his soul can be redeemed. There are absolute truths which must be accepted. The Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule are sacred declarations which all good people try to follow. The righteous triumph, but the wicked will be punished.

The everyday view of self is predicated upon the accepted views of saints, dramatists, poets, and novelists, most of whom, until relatively recent times, reflected the traditional moral views of Western European civilization. The nature of self was defined by religious authority and church doctrine. Few dared or even wanted to question the moral absolutes of the church. Aristotle, long before the Christian church arose, developed a naturalistic philosophy—that is, a philosophy based on the *physical* nature of the universe. When he was rediscovered by the Christian scholars, he was "incorporated" (by Aquinas) into official Catholic doctrine.

The tortuous separation of church and state, started with Philip the Fourth in France at the close of the Thirteenth century and was fairly completed at the close of the eighteenth century. The separation secularized politics but did not secularize the nature of self. The fundamenal moral assumptions of Western religions have been incorporated into the institutional life of Western society.

The first significant break with the traditional view of man's psychological nature was made by Darwin's Origin of the Species, published in 1859. Man ceased to be considered a fallen angel and was seen as a rising anthropoid. The impact made by the book was terrific. President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, relates how, when he wanted to read the Origin of Species, directly after it appeared, he waited until darkness and read it by lantern in a barn. He feared being caught with a copy.

Despite the evidence for evolution and the support it received

from scholars, many laymen remained unconvinced. Thus, about seventy-five years later (1936), a survey of the social attitudes of thousands of high school teachers all over the country found more than half disagreeing with the evolutionary hypothesis.<sup>1</sup>

A second, and more sweeping, revision of the psychological nature of man's self resulted from the work of Sigmund Freud, beginning around 1910. Freud, no less than Darwin, was subjected to newspaper and public ridicule. He, too, was considered a destroyer of ideals and morality.

The works of Darwin and Freud are beacon lights in the search for understanding man, but these two were not alone. Research in paleontology, anthropology, geology, neurology, comparative anatomy, cytology, genetics, biology, and physiology supported the evolutionary hypothesis—that man is linked with the animal kingdom.

The development of mental-hygiene clinics throughout the country, the use of group therapy in the armed services, the development of social case-work practices, the treatment of the mentally ill and deviating personalities, counseling services, child-guidance work, and psychological clinics are all consequences of the pioneering genius of Freud and others in the field of psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and mental hygiene.

In the light of these many influences, the layman's view of what man's self is like has had to be revised. The average adult realizes that there are psychiatrists and special treatment for the mentally unwell; and many adults are familiar with the language. They speak fluently about the unconscious, the inferiority complex, insecurity, sibling rivalry, aggression, super-ego, psychosomatic, projection, and so on. Most of them feel and act, however, as if they were unaware of these forces. They behave in terms of the simple dichotomies of good-bad, nice-not nice, kind-unkind, honest-dishonest, loving-hateful—especially when they are emotionally involved in the situation.

The explanation for this lies in the deep-seated feelings about self imposed upon us in our early days of development. We learn quite early what behavior is approved and disapproved, which acts are considered good and which bad. We seek approval and avoid disapproval in accord with these relatively simple moral judgments of our parents and playmates. The feelings accompanying our early behavior gradually develop into the standards we employ, as adults, for our own conduct as well as for the acts of others.

The everyday view of self rests on moral bias, not on objective description. The layman's view praises or blames rather than inquires. The child is good if he conforms to the adult's or the school's demands, and bad or willful or a "problem" if he refuses to conform. The good side is encouraged by reward, and the bad side discouraged by punishment.

An understanding of self requires a different outlook. Adjectives such as good or bad, lovable or hateful—name-calling such as lazy, impudent, disrespectful—simply have no place in a description of self. Such moral judgments describe the feelings of the critic rather than the behavior of the criticized.

The foregoing description of the commonly shared moral view of self is no longer accepted by professional social scientists. Modern psychological studies of man's nature and inquiries into personality development reveal the self to be a highly complicated and rather inconsistent structure. Several examples will indicate what is meant.

Suppose the question is raised, "Do you sometimes hate your mother?" On numerous occasions the writer has asked this question of groups of college students who had taken one or more courses in introductory psychology, and the same question was raised at the early meetings of the seminars. Rarely has anyone replied affirmatively. The replies received were: "Why, that's a silly question!" "Who ever heard of such a thing?" "It's not natural." When the same question was asked toward the close of the twelve or fifteen sessions, everyone without exception answered affirmatively.

The first time the question is raised, the members of the seminar groups respond to it in their framework of moral approval or disapproval, the view which was shaped by the child-mother relationship. After a semester, their increased insight into human relations frees them from the conventional moral point of view and

permits them to view objectively the psychological realities involved in intimate association.

The following excerpt is taken from the third meeting of one of the groups. Stella has been teaching in the New York City schools for about ten years. Ned is teaching for the first year.

. . .

INSTRUCTOR: We were speaking of fear.

STELLA: We should be afraid of certain things. Personally, I'm God-fearing. I believe in God, and I think we should be afraid of certain things. I think if we do wrong things, we'll be punished.

HARRY: Let's get away from the religious aspects and ask whether or not the children in your classroom are afraid of your disapproval.

Many of them are fresh and vulgar. There are about five or six who won't work. They indulge in horseplay and do everything they shouldn't be doing.

NED: Well, I have several over-aggressive children. I think their aggressions are due to certain fears. I spoke at length with the parents of this group, and I could see that these children were terribly repressed in their families. They are aggressive in the classroom to attract attention. Perhaps they're seeking approval.

stella: After all, if they're idle, they'll get into mischief. I've got to keep them busy. I teach social science. I tell them all kinds of stories. I give them books to read, and they simply don't respond. Some of you who aren't from New York City don't know the type of roughnecks coming from the immigrant neighborhoods in this city. They're vulgar and disrespectful and sassy. Now, I'm a good teacher and I don't see that there is anything wrong with me.\*

<sup>\*</sup>This is a good example of the rejection of pupils from lower socioeconomic levels by a teacher with middle-class standards.

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NED: Maybe, at times, kids don't feel like working.

STELLA: Well, I have to prepare my lessons. Why don't they pre-

pare theirs?

Stella's and Ned's approaches are poles apart. Ned is seeking to understand what the aggressiveness of his pupils means; Stella is condemning them. She would have to undergo considerable reorganization of self before she could obtain sufficient insight into her own tensions to realize that her own personal needs block her teaching effectiveness. Her obvious, common-sense moral judgments about self would have to be surrendered for a different kind of insight into personality growth.

#### Modern Insight into Self

The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with briefly describing a limited number of concepts which are basic to an understanding of the development of self. It is not our purpose here to describe the formation of personality. The nature of the "ego" or "self" can be approached from many points of view.2 There is a great deal of disagreement among students in the field as to the conceptual tools to be used in an analysis of self. There are also differences in theoretical orientation. On the other hand, although the terms used may differ, there is a solid core of agreement on the part of all psychiatrists regarding the underlying dynamics of the development of self. In the present context we are interested in selecting from this common area of agreement a few basic concepts which will illuminate the teaching ↔ learning process. In other words, the purpose of the following analysis is limited to helping the teacher gain deeper insight into the psychological dynamisms which operate in the interpersonal relations between teacher and learner.

We shall start by describing briefly the polarity of the self. The individual, to use a technical term, is frequently ambivalent. This means, in popular language, that we often do not know what we

want and can not make up our "mind" what to do. At other times we want to do many things at the same time and find it difficult to decide on one thing. Or again, sometimes, instead of expressing our real feelings we restrain ourselves, only to become angry with ourselves because we did not say or do what we "really" wanted. On the other hand, if, sometimes, we spontaneously speak our piece or act just as we feel at the moment, especially when this is not expected, we feel that we have "put our foot in it," and we fear what may happen to us as a result.

We call this kind of activity, which all of us experience time and again, the "polarity of the self." We shall discuss this polarity from several points of view, all of which, however, are interrelated. We shall refer to negative and positive willing, to independent and dependent willing, to the conflict of our positive and negative wills, and to the "will-guilt" problem.

Each of these dimensions deals in a slightly different way with what we consider to be one of the central problems of psychological experience—namely, how does the socialized individual deal with his need to be different, at times, from everyone else? What happens when one denies his difference, and what happens when one insists on being different? What kinds of conflict does this generate, and how do we protect ourselves from facing such conflict? These and similar questions are the concern of this chapter.

Any analysis which purports to remain close to the processes of behavior is caught in a dilemma. If one seeks to make an analysis, the data, perforce, must be "frozen," and the living process is distorted. The reader may therefore find it necessary to read the entire chapter before he can synthesize—as they are synthesized in real life—the dynamisms which we must treat separately for purposes of study.

# The Polarity of the Self

What is it that a careful observer notes as he watches any normal living person? The individual is directing his behavior. Aristotle

noted this when he framed his famous definition, "Man is a rational animal." Aristotle placed the focus on man's rationality, his ability to think. "Virtue," he said, "is a state of deliberate moral purpose consisting in a mean relative to ourselves, that mean determined by reason."

This conscious awareness of man is, perhaps, the most remarkable fact in all of nature. In the entire realm of the universe, as far as present evidence indicates, man is the only form of nature that possesses consciousness. The fact of consciousness is a given, fundamental phenomenon.

The evidence from comparative anatomy and comparative zoology indicate that man's autonomic nervous system is very much older than the cerebrospinal, or central, nervous system. The central nervous system, the brain, developed later and now aids the animal to adjust to and to survive changes in the environment. *Homo sapiens* is no longer satisfied with bread. He wants to understand why he eats and drinks and sleeps. The brain has, in effect, become the tail which wags the dog.

From the point of view of the evolution of species, homo sapiens is a very recent development. He is a rational animal as well as a rational animal. Man thinks and directs his behavior, but which aspects of his behavior—the intellectual or the emotional—are more vital? The dichotomy is false, since one acts and reacts organically, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. The qualifying adverbs are useful analytically to characterize focal aspects of total acts, but there are no such things as ideas or emotions, although grammatically "idea" and "emotion" function as nouns. What takes place is organic behavior, which assumes varied forms.

The question to be investigated is: What determines, at any given moment, the particular organization or integration of organic activity? Organic behavior is not chaotic. On every level it is organized. Physiological, chemical, neurological, and intellectual processes are each organized, in balanced systems, and all organic processes are system-interrelated. The human organism is constantly in process of adjustment. It discovers momentary balances

only to meet different situations for which new adjustments must be made.

The visceral adjustments—such as digestion, circulation, equilibrium, water balance of the cells, respiration and pulse rate, and multiplication of white corpuscles—are chiefly autonomic, although they are influenced by thinking (psychosomatic effects). Purposive adjustments, which are often influenced by visceral changes, are primarily conscious activities involving the cerebrospinal nervous system. Behavior appears to be directed. Two of the greatest neurologists and physiologists have summed it up in these words: "Whatever its special origin may be, directiveness in living organisms is a fact of observation." The mechanism itself is "an active participant in the process, and it has a certain range of freedom of action. . . . Intentional self-determination is inherent in the organism man." 4

"Self-determination is inherent in the organism man." Somehow the organism, through the ability to anticipate imaginatively the consequences of behavior, to think, currently, of the future, intentionally acts or wills in one way rather than in another. What is the nature of this process? Some kind of principle of effort, some kind of will, is certainly involved in determining the kind of adjustment or direction of change. No one today has a clear explanation of precisely what is involved. Indeed, there is no evidence of how neural impulses are translated into *conscious* awareness. The two levels are certainly related, but the nature of the relationship and the processes involved are unfilled gaps in science. We can say, however, that the individual at any moment organizes his habits, traits, attitudes, and energies so that a given goal or end-in-view may be attained. Now, *the way* in which this integration for a specific end is accomplished we call an act of will.

Suppose, as I sit writing at my desk, I suddenly hear from the hall a shout, "Fire!" Consider the thousands of changes in my immediate scheme of organization, from the number of muscle coordinations involved in rushing out of the apartment and the increases in pulse and respiratory rate, adrenalin output, sugar level, and tenseness of all large muscles to the emotions I experience

regarding other people in possible danger and my deliberate exploration of what to do next. There has been a decided change in my organic "set" from a more or less relaxed writing organization to a tense, conscious, flight-from-danger set toward an exit. The different integration of behavior directed toward a specific focal end is an act of will.

The term "will" is used in its everyday meaning. Nothing mysterious is meant. There is no thing called will, no entity, no vital "force." By "will" we mean simply the act of reorganizing our energies toward a selected goal.

In any situation in which an individual is actively seeking for an adjustment, there is dominantly present one of two basic orientations toward the problem—namely, "I will" or "I will not." The attitude "I will" may be compounded of conscious awareness or unconscious emotional drive, in varying degrees of intensity, just as the attitude "I will not" may be similarly compounded. Whenever an individual is faced with the need for change, for altered balance between his present organization and what troubles him, he will either face the challenge or seek to avoid it. He will go toward or away from the obstacle.

Fundamentally, the individual does not want to change. He tends to react to new experiences according to his accustomed ways of reacting. Once a certain organization has been achieved, the tendency is not to disturb it. This holds true for his tastes, likes, dislikes, ideas, friendships, clothes, beliefs, and motor habits.\* The individual does not want to change. "I will not be different from what I now am." The individual fights against disturbing his achieved present wholeness.

Change, however, is inevitable. Adjustments to persons, places, time, objects, and situations have to be made if the individual is to survive. "I guess I will have to do it his way." "I will have to get out of the way of the automobile." "I will have to be on time." "I will have to change my job."

<sup>\*</sup> Every system in nature tends to remain in equilibrium, tends to change so as to minimize any external disturbance (Newton's First Law of Motion, The Law of Inertia).

The human will, the integrating factor in self-hood, operates between two poles. At one end, the self fights against any disturbance which threatens its present organization. This tendency not to change is the basic one. The individual wants to remain and be and express himself just as he is. In a world of space and time and other people, however, this is impossible. The will to change starts a counterswing to the other pole. Reorganization, more or less extensive, occurs.\*

Whenever the issue is vital, the shifts of will in opposite directions are marked by emotional disturbance. What is the nature of this disturbance? In order to make this clear, it is necessary to note two general psychological needs of all people—namely, the need for independence or self-expression, and the need for the approval from those upon whom we depend.

# Independence-Dependence

There is a general agreement on the part of clinicians concerned with human behavior that every individual wants to feel psychologically secure and approved of. He wants a sense of belonging, of being loved. This need leads the individual to become like those upon whom he depends. He acquires their ways of thinking, feeling, and doing. There is close identification.

The identification, in earlier years of development, is not a deliberately conscious process. The infant's ties to the mother are a matter not of logic but of love and living. Infants and children look to their parents for protection, direction, approval, and affection. They want to depend upon them.

The adolescent and the adult also need "to count," to feel wanted and approved of. This need leads them to join clubs, form friendships, compete in sports, and engage in activities which win

<sup>\*</sup>This striving for balance on the psychological level may be viewed as a kind of "social homeostasis" similar to Walter Cannon's principle of physiological homeostasis, which describes the tendency of an organization to maintain within itself relatively balanced conditions by means of its own regulatory mechanisms.<sup>5</sup>

admiration and approval from others. This gives one a comfortable feeling of security or adequacy.

Every individual, however, possesses a unique personality. This is what constitutes his individuality. Every artist paints in his own way. This is his style. Every concert artist performs differently. The housewife takes pride in decorating her home and arranging the furniture according to her personal, individual taste. Everyone wants to express this unique difference. The feeling of counting in one's own eyes is important. Possessing self-esteem is one of the most pervasive feelings in self-hood. The need for expression of one's independent self is without doubt the basic integrating principle of behavior. Every one wants his independent will to be focal in his activity.

We tend to impose our likes and dislikes upon those who differ with us. We struggle against the will of another when it threatens our sense of independence. When the organization of self which has been achieved is threatened, there is a rush of feeling. The sense of wholeness is disturbed.

The resulting discomfort has to be resolved, either through outward expression or through inner struggle, until an on-going comfortable reorganization of wholeness is again achieved. Consider the relatively minor frustration everyone has experienced when the pencil point breaks as he is writing. The writing "set" has been interfered with. The will-to-write has been momentarily blocked. More likely than not, we partially allay the annoyance and irritation by throwing the pencil down on the table. Our annoyance is projected onto the pencil. The pencil is sharpened, or another one is obtained, and a reorganization of the writing "set" is achieved.

As we watch ourselves and others, we are struck by this basic polarity of independence-dependence. Man is set against himself. Every individual seeks security and dependence, but he also wants to assert himself to be independent, to express himself in accordance with his own peculiar temperament. The harsh world of reality in the form of dangerous parental and social prohibitions and the relentless right-of-way objects cannot be easily overcome.

Problems and dangers which cannot be conquered oppose the individual. The unknown is feared. Security, warmth, protection, and dependence are longed for, sought for, and achieved, only to be repudiated by the incessant demand to express oneself, to dominate—and the pendulum starts its counterswing.

One rebels at being dependent and secure, settled and safe. The urge to dominate, to express one's peculiar difference, to be an independent individual reasserts itself. More prohibitions and other dangers are encountered.

The individual, fearful at the expression of his individuality, again seeks shelter in the approval of others and wants to behave in accordance with what others expect or demand.<sup>6</sup>

Every person faces this problem of self-expression versus repression. Most individuals are neither anarchic in their claims for expression of their independent self nor beaten into dulled submission by the will of others. Most people achieve a working balance, discovered in living experience, between their own independent needs and their dependent social needs. The achievement is never static, nor is it gained without struggle. It is constantly being shifted, redefined, and paid for at the cost of emotional disturbance to the self or to others.

To summarize what has been said up to this point, the human will, the integrating factor in self-hood, is dual. On the one hand, the self resists change; it fights anything which threatens its present organization. On the other hand, the self must be modified in normal association with others and in adjusting to a changing environment. Individuals want to be independent, but they also have to or want to be dependent. This leads to fundamental and inevitable conflict in ourselves and in relation to others.

It should be emphasized that these needs of dependence and independence are not capricious spirits which exist somewhere in the organism. They are terms used to characterize, generally, the patterned, integrative response of the organism toward specific goals.

### Conflict of Wills

The individual not only faces the inner struggle of his own conflicting dual self, but he must also adjust to others, who, like him, have their own intrapersonal conflicts. Actually, the two levels of inter- and intra-conflict of wills are not easily separated. The developing self is always in interaction with other developing selves. The *focus* of the struggle shifts rapidly and imperceptibly from an inner struggle of self to a contest of wills between two or more individuals.

Indeed, we often fight against or depend upon another to avoid facing up to our own inner splits—that is, to avoid struggling with ourselves. We protest too much, for example, because we sense the justice of an accusation by others, or self-accusation, which we want to deny. At other times we submit docilely to avoid the disagreeable consequences we anticipate if we disagree. This continuous struggle of one's own will with the will of others is characteristic of all self-development. One's sense of wholeness, of self-hood, is challenged by the ever new configurations of experience. The self must be reorganized so that the challenge is met or assimilated or overcome and a new sense of wholeness is achieved.

We fear facing the new, because it calls for changing the satisfying balance we have achieved, and we fear leaving the old for the same reason. To change means to surrender, in part, the comfort of the control which has been achieved. To change means to give up a sense of security for the insecurity of the strange or the new.

The opening meeting of one of the seminar groups may be taken as a typical example. The first ten minutes were spent in brief introductions of the several members—their names, where they taught, and their especial interests. The instructor then stated that the group was ready for discussion. INSTRUCTOR: As you heard last week, when this seminar was planned, we are to explore the factors which enter into the teaching ⇔learning process. The problem is certainly complex and can be approached from many angles. What suggestions have any of you as to our starting point? [Silence]

We'd welcome anyone's idea on where to start.

[Silence, and exchange of glances between members of group. No member glanced at the instructor for more than a second or two]

What seems to be the matter? Aren't we ready to start?

JIM: Sure. I guess we have started. We're all listening. At least, I am.

INSTRUCTOR: Listening for what?

JIM: Why, naturally, to what you're going to tell us.

INSTRUCTOR: I'm afraid there isn't much I have to tell you. I think there is a great deal which all of us need to explore. What are some of the problems connected with good teaching and genuine learning? [Silence]

JERRY: That's what we came here to find out.

INSTRUCTOR: Good, now what are some of the things we want to explore?

[Silence]\*

The members of the group bring their teacher-student expectations and habits to this meeting. They are prepared to sit back and listen or take notes. The authority is to tell them what he wants them to know. This is part of their lifelong habit of escaping their responsible effort to learn. They are resisting change. They want to persist in their present organization. Without necessarily being conscious of what is taking place, they are fighting against surren-

<sup>\*</sup> See pp. 80-82 for a similar response to an opening session.

dering present attitudes and feelings. They are saying, in effect, "You take over. Tell us what to do and we'll go through the usual classroom routine." This is the negative aspect of willing, the resistance to change.

Change need not occur in this manner. One can, positively, choose to change. A positive willingness to move in the direction of another is made possible if the one who is to change is given the right of self-determination—if his own organization is not threatened, if rather, part of his organization, at the moment, is the request of one upon whom he is dependent or with whom he is united. His own willing being respected, he wills, positively, to accept the will of another.

• • •

HILDA: Tonight's discussion has started me thinking about my attitudes in previous meetings. I'm glad I've started some self-evaluation. I guess for the first time, tonight, I've allowed myself to become involved and, though I don't feel comfortable, I'm certain something is happening and something good will come out of it. I guess I'm fighting myself instead of fighting you or the class.

• • •

The following excerpt illustrates the futility of an attempt on the part of a teacher to avoid the struggle which both instructor and students have to experience if intellectual concepts are to be translated into more meaningful contexts by the student.

During the fourth meeting, the members of the group were superficially involved in perfunctory discussion. They were exploring some of the ways in which the personal tensions of the teacher get in the way of professional classroom performance. The instructor sensed that the members felt uncomfortable. No one was willing to come to grips with the fact that pupils sometimes become targets for the release of the teacher's personal tensions. The recog-

nition of this fact, through specific illustrations by any one member of the group, would unavoidably involve self-criticism and discomfort.

The members were not willing to become really involved in this important issue. Toward the close of the meeting, the instructor introduced the "will-guilt" concept without carrying the analysis very far. He suggested that the concept be discussed at the opening of the fifth meeting. Everyone thought that would be an excellent idea.

No one, however, mentioned this idea during the fifth meeting. Near the close of the session, the instructor remarked:

INSTRUCTOR: All of you may recall that last week we agreed to discuss the "will-guilt" concept. It wasn't even mentioned tonight until this moment. This is an excellent example of how my own annoyance last week trapped me into making the very mistake we were discussing. I was annoyed and made myself more comfortable by talking to you about will and guilt. Last week, all of us were uncomfortable—you because you were unwilling to admit that you sometimes take out your tensions on the pupils, and I because of my annoyance that you were trying to avoid facing the issue. So I made a little speech and got rid of my annoyance without helping you very much.

GREGORY: I can see what you mean. I hadn't the faintest notion of what you meant last week. But something unusual happened in my classes during the past week and I know now what took place. I noticed the last two days that when I spoke to the children by way of correcting them they glanced at each other as if to ask, "What's the matter with him?" This happened for several days. I see now what it was. I had stopped yelling at the children. I felt very uncomfortable at the close of our last meeting. I think your speech on guilt had some effect without my realizing it, because I was annoyed with myself in

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class during the early part of the week. I guess my guilt at yelling was becoming conscious. I certainly see that now. It wasn't what you said so much as my own annoyance that led to the change.

The instructor, during the fourth meeting, had been trying to hasten insight regarding the will-guilt problem before the members were prepared or willing to discuss it. More accurately, however, the instructor had been seeking to rid himself of his personal annoyance at not having matters proceed as he wished, as well as his discomfort in sensing the confusion and resistance of the group members. He wanted to make them more comfortable in order to be comfortable himself. The instructor tried to get rid of his conflict and smooth the way for the group members. He failed in both instances. Whatever development occurred followed the acceptance of the disturbance.

#### Will-Guilt

LILA: The point of view that conflict and uncomfortable, even painful, efforts toward balance could be evidence of growth and adjustment (rather than necessarily of maladjustment) was perhaps the most extraordinary revelation to me.

MABEL: We're afraid to live in pieces; we're afraid to try and discover answers; we have to live the experience in our class-rooms. We want answers before we try to do anything so that we can avoid the personal problem in growth involved in seeking answers through our own struggles.

We have already discussed (pp. 240-242) the will conflict as centering about the problem of change. We now return to the

analysis of will conflict centered about dependence (conformity) versus independence (spontaneity). Strictly speaking, the problem of "to change or not to change" is another aspect of the problem of being dependent or independent. The problem of change arises as a consequence of the conflict of whether to be dependent (to conform) or to express one's spontaneous, independent will.

Some readers will have grasped the significance of the will-guilt conflict through our analysis of it in the context of change. Others, perhaps, will be helped to see its meaning in the present context of the dependence-independence polarity.

If people accepted the polarity of the will conflict, they would not be as twisted as they are in their thinking and feeling. Generally, one side only is accepted, the "good" side—that is, the dependent side, which incorporates parental and social demands or expectations. In so far as the developing youngster conforms to the patterns of behavior of family, school, and social life, he is well behaved. In so far as he deviates from accepted norms, he is troublesome and, in more extreme cases, a delinquent.

Consider the attitudes of adults toward their children. During infancy, for the first year or two, the margin for expression of difference on the child's part is very wide, and the need to conform to adult patterns is minimized. During early childhood, the psychologically more sophisticated parents seek to help their children to stand on their own feet, to acquire independence, to do things for themselves. But in the preadolescent and adolescent years, the same parents complain that their children will not conform, will not listen to them. They are unhappy because the children are exercising the independence they so carefully nourished for them. Now the margin of independent self-expression has been narrowed and the area of social conformity widened. The parents insist on conformity. They cudgel, cajole, threaten, bribe, or reason with children.

The need for suppressing or inhibiting individual difference and conforming to adult standards is understandable. When and how the translation is made is vital. In Chapter 1, we discussed the role of arbitrary authority in this process. Fear, guilt, hostility, and anxiety accompany the child's development into adolescence

and young adulthood. What and whom do children—and adults—fear? What makes us feel hostile, guilty, or anxious?

We dare not will as we think or feel because we fear condemnation, punishment, parental or social disapproval. We often fear expressing our independence because it gets us into trouble. The price of approval of others is submitting to them. The price of being different is disapproval of those upon whom we depend.

The individual is in conflict. But generally he submits and conforms to the demands and expectations of others. The religious beliefs of our society, its literature, and its leaders label certain conduct "good" and contrary conduct "bad." Parents and teachers support these judgments. Our independent side is "willful" (full of our will), evil, wicked, sinful, or naughty.

The child internalizes and assimilates the attitudes of the parent. Thus, when he expresses independence, he is led to feel wicked, bad, sinful, and guilty. He develops feelings of inferiority in relation to what others, whose judgment is important to him, think and say about him.

The need to appear socially acceptable and one of the group is the source of lying, rationalizing, "double talk," and the long list of defensive dynamisms which characterize respectability and normality. The maintenance of pretense becomes a lifelong, tortuous task. To pretend to be upright, consistent, noble, loving, and kind calls for a denial that one is also at times unkind, ignoble, inconsistent, and hateful. Most often, without being aware of what takes place, we conceal, distort, or create attitudes, and engage in the appropriate behavior which "justifies" our action. The pretty pictures, the "idealized image," we have built up about ourselves must not be spoiled.

The processes of denying our need to be more independent, to engage more often in self-expression, are accompanied by resentment and hostility. We feel frustrated. There are times when we assert ourselves. Disapproval of others follows. This makes us feel guilty and fearful. We "put our foot in it," or we "stick out our chin." We then seek to re-establish ourselves in the good favor of those who disapprove of our conduct. Now, when we again give in

and succumb to the wishes of others, we feel resentful and hostile at having to suppress and deny our difference.

In brief, too much independence in any given situation leads to guilt, fear of consequences, self-criticism, and anxiety. This leads toward a more dependent willing to re-establish oneself, to arrive at a better balance, to rid oneself of the discomfort. Guilt overpowers the independent will. At other times, too much dependence is followed by feelings of frustration and resentment. One's need for independent self-expression has been blocked. A point is soon reached at which the individual "can't take any more," and he again asserts himself. Guilt overpowers will just as at other times will overpowers guilt. The struggle continues as temporary balances are upset by changing environments and inner experience.

The psychologically more healthful approach is openly to recognize the dual aspects of self and its accompanying will-guilt struggle. The way to deal with our conflicting, ambivalent self is to recognize and accept conflict and ambivalence as an inevitable part of living. It is infinitely more disturbing emotionally to deny conflict and to be unconsciously or consciously driven to find ways of justifying the denial than to accept it. Indeed, it is only when its inevitability is recognized that we are able to discover the real source of disturbance—namely, our own struggle to be different from and to be like others, to balance the need for self-expression with the need for social conformity, the two chief aspects of self-hood. Recognizing the real problem enables us to achieve more comfortable balance than struggling futilely to deny the struggle.

Some of the members of our group had reached the point at which they were ready to admit that their own problems of will conflict created problems of class discipline, as the following comments show.\*

STANLEY: There certainly are times in a class when you have to control the group.

<sup>\*</sup> For further illustrations, see pp. 212, 217.

- MURIEL: Well, that would depend upon the size of the class and the situation.
- JERRY: Well, that's precisely the problem. You can't lay down a rule about it. You have to feel guilty, overcome the resentment you feel because your authority is being questioned, sweat it through, keeping in mind what's good for the child, and decide when and where to take hold. No one can teach you that.
- PHILIP: If teachers were able to show the pupils some of their own mistakes, that would increase the respect of the children for the teacher and would encourage the children to admit their mistakes and not be defensive. If the teacher doesn't set herself up as a paragon of virtue, the pupils are more apt to admit misconduct and to control themselves. They won't fight authority in hundreds of ways kids do.
- It occurs to me that I go into class feeling I'm boss and that I've got to control the group. I say to myself: Who are going to be the trouble makers? That's certainly not being interested in helping children. It sounds more as if I'm defending myself against recognizing that I don't know what to do.
- MURIEL: I think the children do the same sort of thing. They are trying to figure the best way of meeting the threat which we, as the teachers, present to them. If we removed the club, there'd be less need to fight back. Or maybe we should use a club on ourselves.
- STANLEY: What bothers me is: How do you know when you are taking out your guilt and tensions upon the children?
- NANCY: I don't think you can find out unless you start getting some insight into your own motivations, which I think is what we are doing here. You've first got to know about yourself.
- INSTRUCTOR: And then, if you know, Nancy, you'll be able to decide?
- NANCY: Not until you're ready to admit your failings, and that's not easy.

Quality of learning or skill in teaching depend, in the last analysis, upon self-discipline. Self-discipline is another name for the problem of learning to change. The individual who wants to change will need to accept the fact that he is dissatisfied with or critical of his present organization. He will have to criticize rather than defend himself.

Ordinarily we find it easier to place blame or responsibility elsewhere than to admit our own felt shortcomings. In this way we try to avoid the conflict and dissatisfaction which are generated by our feelings of guilt. A teacher becomes increasingly skilled, however, as she develops more insight into her own will-guilt struggles. The best test of teacher performance is found not in student accomplishment but in how well the teacher uses herself, her insights, her awareness of what enters into the teaching carning process. The teacher is responsible for her teaching skills, not for student results. The likelihood is, however, that pupils will learn better if teachers teach better.

If operations are successful, most patients do recover. The surgeon who employs the best surgical techniques with the highest skills accepted by the profession is a successful surgeon no matter what happens to the patient. There are many variables besides the operation which determine recovery. When the competent surgeon finishes, he often remarks, "The case is now in the hands of God." The surgeon has done all he could, and the operation was successful. Conversely, a physician is not necessarily competent because patients become well. They can recover despite poor medical attention, just as they can die despite the best available treatment. The test of medical skill lies in the art and practice of medicine. Similarly, the test of teaching lies in the performance of the teacher.

Many teachers look to the performance of the pupils for the test of their teaching ability. They seek for reassurance from the wrong source. Assurance comes from inner confidence and self-discipline, which, in turn, rest on achieving changing balances of the will-guilt conflict.

The excerpts which follow illustrate attempts on the part of the seminar members to avoid accepting self-responsibility for teaching performance and their gradual realization that this avoidance is precisely the problem. During the fifth meeting, the question of what characterizes successful teaching was being discussed.

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phere. The opportunity is there, but the children don't respond. Now, if the children don't take advantage of the opportunity, I don't call that successful teaching. Something is wrong somewhere.

DAVE: I agree. I don't see how we can call a teacher successful if the pupil doesn't accomplish something as a result of being taught.

INSTRUCTOR: The child must perform well if the teacher is to be judged successful. Is that the way you want to put it, Dave?

[Elizabeth and Dave have stated their criterion of a successful teacher—namely, the degree to which the pupils learn. The instructor clarifies their point of view.]

DAVE: That's right. We have to have our will imposed. The test that I've done a good job is found in how much the children learn. If they learn, I'm reassured.

PAULA: We have a teacher in our administration who is considered the outstanding success by the principal. She gives the students a list of questions regularly. They look up the answers and give a daily written report. They are always quiet. There isn't a sound in her classroom except her own voice. The principal tells us her pupils are always doing their work and are learning a lot.

Now I know as a matter of fact that the kids are deathly afraid of the woman. But the faculty members as well as the principal consider her an outstandingly successful teacher. I know they are afraid of her, but the youngsters are certainly learning the subject matter, and she seems to be a successful teacher.

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JERRY: When I was in the army, I did everything the sergeant told me to do. I was afraid of him and kept my mouth shut. That's the way I learned to get along and stay out of trouble.

INSTRUCTOR: Paula, are you and Jerry suggesting that the teachersergeants plant fear in the children and have them learn that way?

JERRY: Definitely not!

PAULA: No, I don't approve of that.

INSTRUCTOR: You both feel, then, that's not a good way to learn?

JERRY: I don't like it.

PAULA: And I feel guilty, although I don't know why.

[Paula has introduced the qualifying factor of fear, which she and Jerry do not approve of. By restating their position, the instructor confirms doubts which they themselves entertain.]

LAWRENCE: It seems to me the real test of successful teaching is whether the children are given a real choice to do what they want. The child wouldn't always make a good choice, but I don't think that's the responsibility of the teacher. It seems to me the important thing for the teacher is not the product but the process, that if you take care of the process the chances are the products are more likely to be what you would like them to be. If the teacher creates a stimulating atmosphere, he doesn't have to feel insecure.

[Lawrence really has hit the nail on the head very early in the evening's discussion. The instructor was tempted at this point to expand on Lawrence's statement but realized that only one or two others would understand. The subsequent remarks by John, Ned, and Mabel confirmed their inability—at the time—to accept a "statement" of what characterizes a successful teacher.]

JOHN: I don't see why teachers have to feel insecure. They have no reason to if they know their subject. After all, the students aren't at your level. You know much more than they do, and I simply don't understand why the teacher has to feel insecure or guilty.

LAWRENCE: What gives you guilt, or, at least, what gives me guilt, is worrying whether or not the kids are learning anything that's really important to them.

NED: That's right. I make children take home textbooks because the principal tells us we have to give them textbooks to take home to satisfy the parents who complain to him. I'm sure we're all doing the wrong thing. I don't believe in textbooks!

INSTRUCTOR: What do you believe in, Ned?

NED: My school is a madhouse from the point of view of the old curriculum, but I believe in creating a healthy environment as I see it.

INSTRUCTOR: And what is that?

NED: I'd like to help the kids get from me or the books what they feel like getting and then leave the kids alone.

INSTRUCTOR: What keeps you from doing exactly that?

[Ned has indicated his dissatisfaction. The instructor judged that this was the proper time to guide him toward exploring another point of view which he wanted to help the group to see—namely, the teacher's role in assuming responsibility for introducing change.]

NED: I see now that I, for one, and, I suppose, many of us, blame the system to protect ourselves against assuming some risk in trying to change it.

MABEL: I feel very sympathetic with what Ned has just said because I've experienced the same thing many times.

[Ned and Mabel are moving toward a different point of view.]

HELEN: It just occurs to me to ask whether you consider this a successful meeting?

INSTRUCTOR: I wonder why you ask that, Helen?

HELEN: If you do, we may find the clue to successful teaching.

Are we learning something?

INSTRUCTOR: I really don't know the answer.

HELEN: Well, if we finish and are as mixed up as we seem, would you feel you were successful with us?

INSTRUCTOR: Yes, I think so.

STELLA: I don't get it.

JOHN: You mean you wouldn't feel badly if we remain mixed up? INSTRUCTOR: Not particularly.

DAVE: Even if we feel dissatisfied with what's happening?

[Helen has asked the direct question as to what constitutes successful teaching. The instructor has turned the responsibility back to her, John, and Dave. He wants the group members to struggle through to the idea of self-discipline on the teacher's part as being the core of skilled performance.]

INSTRUCTOR: Does a successful teaching job depend upon the approval or disapproval of the pupils or upon the teacher's awareness of what is happening?

[The instructor has now raised the crucial point, feeling that most of the members are ready to see the implications of the question.]

JOHN: There's the key to the whole business! You have to be a certain way before you can relate to the children. In other words, you've got to understand yourself and how to use yourself before you can help your pupils. Well, my goodness, that's what we've been talking about for the past several weeks!

HOPE: I'm beginning to see something for the first time. The important thing is for the teacher to be aware of what's happening. Lawrence said that earlier, but I didn't understand it then. It's the process, not the product. We're the real problem, not the pupils.

[John and Hope are gaining the insight.]

INSTRUCTOR: Hope, would you want to restate that in light of the teacher's chief job?

HOPE: Yes. I think the teacher's chief job is to understand how kids learn and to try and give them the chance to learn. If a teacher can do that, and I know there are no cut and dried rules, she's successful, and how!

INSTRUCTOR: In other words, the teacher's function is to accept the pupils she has, the system she's in, the colleagues she associates with, and the materials at hand—in brief, to carry out the given responsibilities, with all their limitations, in such a way as to create the most favorable atmosphere for learning to occur. What happens to the pupils is not her concern. What she does by way of guiding the process is her chief responsibility.

[In order to utilize Hope's insight for herself and possibly to help the other members, the instructor asked her for a restatement, and then offered still another restatement, which he judged most of the group members were ready to understand.]

LAWRENCE: I'll bet kids would learn much more under such conditions than they do when forced to "learn."

INSTRUCTOR: How, then, would you characterize a successful teacher?

DAVE: From what we're saying, success in teaching certainly doesn't depend upon how much the pupils learn or don't learn.

INSTRUCTOR: But--

ELIZABETH: It depends upon how well the teacher creates the opportunity for the pupils to learn.

JOHN: If a teacher can learn to do that, it doesn't really matter what the pupils think about him. He's got confidence in himself.

INSTRUCTOR: Then, John, it isn't merely a matter of how well the teacher knows the subject matter.

JOHN: Oh, I see that now. He's got to learn to understand himself. It suddenly occurs to me that this is the will-guilt problem which each of us must handle in our own way. For the first time I see what that means!

#### Resistance

The easiest way to meet change is to insist that adjustment proceed according to one's present organization. In other words, the easiest

way to meet change is not to change. "I will have things my way" is the most general pattern which can be observed in all human association. One of the seminar members characterized our second meeting as follows:

"The members say what they will, hear what they will, and become smug in the knowledge that they do not have to pay any attention to what the next fellow says."\*

We resist change because we fear inner disturbance or social disapproval. The individual's defenses are sufficiently opaque to conceal the disturbances which he does not want to recognize. His pretenses are consistently maintained to avoid social disapproval as well as his own. He seems to be a well-adjusted person.

The "well-adjusted" person is a statistical myth. No two individuals are alike, physically or psychologically. The quality of living experience is uniquely one's own, and it is, therefore, impossible to generalize about it. As a matter of gross observation, however, based upon what one reads, sees, and hears, relatively few adults possess a quietly satisfying sense of self-esteem. On the contrary, one observes almost everywhere aggressive competitiveness or frustrated submissiveness of children and adults.

We dimly sense that yielding authority, prestige, or power, the outer defenses against deep-seated inferiority feelings, reawakens the disesteem which we do not want to recognize. We spend much effort, time, and money, therefore, trying to reassure ourselves by convincing others that we are mature adults. We resist change to avoid the pain of self-disapproval and social condemnation.

But change is, nevertheless, unavoidable. Situations alter, and readjustments are necessary. Change, reorganization of will, requires self-criticism. We are not all we thought we were. The idealized image of ourselves or others which we have painted we discover to be false and distorted. The discovery is painful. Our equilibrium is disturbed. To regain balance involves change and disturbance.

<sup>\*</sup> For examples of resistance, see pp. 90-92 and 267.

#### Identification

To realize the polar needs of dependence and independence, to appreciate why one resists change, enables us to help the individual in his struggle. Instead of condemning him for being bad, obstinate, stubborn, or willful, we can communicate, without any moral evaluations, our understanding of how the person feels.

Relatively few adults, including teachers, genuinely accept the dual and ambivalent process inherent in the development of personality. To identify with a person's struggle means to accept him. Once accepted, he does not feel threatened, criticized, or coerced. No one insists on making him other than he wishes to be or to become. He is left free to decide what, if anything, he wants to do about himself.

Such an individual's fears and anxieties are reduced. He need not remain or become defensive. He feels accepted and understood, no matter what he says. Gradually, he is freed to face his ambivalences, hidden feelings, and the side of him which he fears would be disapproved of. The individual, feeling secure in the presence of another who understands him and his struggles, feels close to the helper. He becomes identified with him. He can afford to express his real feelings and recognize his real, not distorted, problems. Not having to fight against the imposition of an alien will, he is left free to struggle or not to struggle with his own will-guilt problem.

The following exchange occurred during the tenth meeting.

remember during the first few meetings every time Jim spoke I felt irritated and annoyed. During the last few meetings, that feeling has simply disappeared. Something certainly happened. I guess that's what's meant by identification. I listen to him now wanting to understand what he's saying rather

than to criticize him. He can differ with me and I don't mind it at all. I guess I not only listen but I hear what he's saying.

NANCY: I think it's because we understand ourselves a bit more and we know we all make the same or different mistakes. We can appreciate others' making mistakes and then don't mind it.

CARL: Sure, we all feel that we don't have to be all right or all wrong but we're all split and mixed up. All of us—teachers and pupils—are that way.

JIM: Exactly how does a teacher identify with a student?

ELIZABETH: I don't think there's really one answer to that question. If you become the kind of person who discovers yourself, you just are the kind of person who accepts kids, and there's no conscious problem of how you do it. What I am trying to say is that if you are a certain way, you act a certain way in the classroom, and you don't have to ask how you do it. You simply do it. You have to do it.

#### Toward a New Teacher

This chapter has attempted to communicate the quality of insight required for an understanding of basic motivations. The readers need not agree with the writer on the specific conceptual analysis. The purpose of the foregoing description will be accomplished if there is agreement that the everyday, moral view of pupil development blocks the teacher in becoming a professional helper, that a mental-hygienic, sophisticated, clinical approach toward understanding oneself—and, hence, others—is a sine qua non of extending help to others.

The empirical data discovered through clinical psychology, social case work, and psychiatric practice compel us to reorganize our views about the nature and development of personality. Most

of us possess an intellectual awareness of the new horizons which have been revealed. We know something about the ambivalence of the self, the need to belong as well as the need to be different, the interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts which follow from seeking balances for our conflicting self, the resistances we set up to deny or to avoid the struggle inherent in learning, and the importance of identifying, of feeling accepted by others.

Acquaintance with this level of thinking and analysis represents only the first steps. Most practicing and prospective teachers have doubtless been exposed at one time or another in their teaching preparation to mental-hygiene principles or have had "courses" in abnormal or social psychology or educational psychology. The next important steps require the assimilation of this kind of thinking into different feelings about oneself and the selves of others. Too many of us merely pay lip and ear service to the modern ideas of personality development and retain the common-sense moral sentiments about "bad" and "good" pupils. The new teacher, herself, may be challenged to work through to acquiring new modes of perceiving classroom activity, new sentiments, and new habits of teaching. This change cannot be made suddenly. The process is gradual.

The following chapter is intended to be a slight contribution to the illumination of the process. We will try to describe some of the characteristics of the teacher who is professionally aware of what is happening in the classroom and illustrate how she makes professional use of herself. The material in the following chapter reformulates the ideas dealt with in this chapter by developing their implications for the teaching \leftarrow learning process.

#### Problems for Discussion

- 1. Consider the supervision you have had or are having. Are you satisfied with its quality? How, in your judgment, might it be improved?
  - 2. A supervisor, having observed a student-teacher's per-

formance in the classroom, meets privately with the student after class and gently points out what in her judgment were several undesirable approaches. The student agrees. Do you consider this procedure helpful to the student? If not, what would you suggest as a better approach?

3. A teacher refers to a failing pupil as "lazy" and "shiftless." What is the value of this opinion for the pupil and for the teacher?

4. Psychiatrists and psychiatry have become targets for many sarcastic jokes. Try to explain this.

5. When pupils have conferences with teachers, do the teachers ordinarily try to understand what the pupils are saying or do they make immediate judgments about what is being said?

6. Take a minute's time to list five of your worst traits. Why do you hesitate and find it necessary to consider the matter?

7. Is having and carrying out a purpose identical with will and willing? What are you willing at this moment?

8. If you are thirsty and want a drink of water, you ordinarily get it. If you want to diet or stop smoking, you ordinarily find it extremely difficult to do. What is the difference?

9. Suppose your teacher was to remark, "I insist that each reader answer every problem raised above." What is your reaction? Why did you react as you did?

10. Almost everyone has had the experience of throwing down a pencil when the point breaks, especially when one is hurrying to write something. Why do we throw the pencil away in disgust?

11. Why do some of us get excited during a discussion of ideas which starts out calmly and ends with the speakers shouting at one another?

12. There is a saying, "Anticipation is greater than realization." Why is this?

13. Why don't your older pupils tell all that they think about you in your presence? Why don't you tell your instructor all that you think about him?

14. Why do the cartoons in magazines and the "comics" in newspapers contain so many tragic incidents?

- 15. What is the plot common to Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny and similar cartoons? Why do these films have such attraction?
- 16. "Take it on the chin" is a common expression. Discuss the psychological significance of this phrase.
- 17. Discuss some of the ways through which pupils resist learning in the classroom. Does the teacher contribute to these resistances? How? What can she do to redirect pupil resistance?
- 18. What criteria would you use to describe (a) a "well-adjusted" pupil in the classroom and (b) a "well-adjusted" classroom teacher?
- 19. What feelings enter into good rapport between pupils and teacher? Is good rapport to be expected as a continuous pattern?
  - 20. What is involved in gaining insight into oneself?

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## Chapter Eleven

# The Professional Self in Teaching

### Projection

Some Characteristics of a Professional Teacher

Problems for Discussion

HE TEACHER OFFERS a professional service. She is engaged by the school board as an educator. The service she is certified to offer is the outcome of her professional development and her understanding of the duties she is to perform. Her relations to the pupils, therefore, and her approach to the teaching learning process rest on a professional understanding of her performance.

This chapter will describe some of the characteristics of the professional teacher. If we are to understand them fully, however, we need to know something about the psychological phenomenon called projection.

#### Projection

Does knowledge of the self increase or distort an understanding of others? Does observation of others increase or prevent an understanding of self? How are these two approaches related to each other? When, in the role of teachers, we want to help others, are we rationalizing our need or intent to control others? Do we really want to help pupils change or do we wish to control them by interpreting their behavior in such ways as to avoid facing and changing ourselves? That is, do we interpret what they say or do to fit in with our point of view so that we can justify our not having to change?

Scientific research, it has often been asserted, deals only with the object of its observation and not with the observer. Interestingly enough, not only has this position been surrendered, but the contrary view is a fundamental postulate of modern relativity physics. The motion and position of the observer with respect to something, his frame of reference, inevitably enters into his description of physical phenomena. In more technical language, the earth is our coordinate system.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the psychologist studying other individuals is viewing them not "objectively" but in light of his self-knowledge, his

peculiar frame of reference. He projects his self-awareness onto others. This tendency to project onto others prevents us from becoming too much aware of ourselves. This leads to an inescapable paradox. None of us really wants to observe or to know himself. On the one hand, without too much awareness (of our coordinate system), we read into others what we discover through introspection of self. We observe and interpret the behavior of others in accordance with our own perceptions of self. On the other hand, in so far as we spontaneously project, we protect ourselves from painful self-discovery. We thereby avoid introspection and fail to take into account our coordinate system, which determines what we will select for observation.\* Learning to know others is thought of as a way to self-discovery but it is, basically, an attempt to conceal discovery of self. Objective "scientific" psychology of personality is basically projective and, hence, turns out to be highly subjective.

Projection is probably man's most characteristic and pervasive mental act.<sup>2</sup> Projection in itself is neither "good" nor "bad." It is an inevitable characteristic of man's psychological growth. Its relative goodness or badness is determined by the consequences which follow for the one projecting and for those projected upon.

In our relationship with parents, sisters, brothers, friends, teachers, and professional or business colleagues, we exploit and are exploited by one another. We use one another in order to control or to be supported. Rarely are we able to stand by and permit the other to use us in his own way and on his own terms. We take advantage of one another in order to satisfy our emotional needs and to work out our personal tensions and anxieties. Most of the time most people use one another as targets for their own psychological needs. The amount and degree of psychological exploitation

<sup>\*</sup>Harry Stack Sullivan said, "Rationalizing is the technical word for the misuse of reasoning, which, in some people, amounts to their major nuisance value in society. All the things they do that don't happen to receive just the right response from the other fellow are 'explained,' and they are always explained plausibly, although few indeed of us know why we make particular social mistakes. If I were asked at a moment of weariness 'What is the outstanding characteristic of the human being?' I believe I would say, 'His plausibility!'"

in human association is so pervasive that it is taken for granted. It is shocking to discover, if one does, the degree to which all individuals seek to impose their particular ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, upon others.

The creative spontaneity of children, for example, their creative expression of difference, is often feared and consequently channelized by the parents into socially approved ways, because of parental anxiety, not because it is "good" for the children (although it may prove to be). The parents really fear themselves. As they observe the behavior of their adolescent youngsters, their own anxiety-accompanied adolescent experiences are reawakened, and these reawakened disturbances compel them to deny their children what had been denied them. Sometimes the opposite tendency is apparent. The parents are driven to get rid of unconscious resentment or guilt by doing things for their children which were not done for them. In either case, the parents are using the children to work out their own disturbance. They depend upon them rather than love them. Genuinely self-sacrificing parents, on the other hand, are often those who do not do certain things for their children. They truly sacrifice self by assimilating or carrying pain as they watch children do things they do not approve of. They stand aside and accept their children just as the children wish to be. The parents do not project.

Teachers, too, have these inevitable needs to dominate or to be well thought of. Few of us are willing to assume the responsibility of genuine self-discipline and to permit pupils a greater margin of independent feeling and thinking.<sup>3</sup>

The following illustration is one of hundreds that could have been selected. The discussion occurred near the beginning of the fourth meeting of one of the seminar groups.

JIM: I was reading about projection. It seems to me that the teacher often projects negatively against the student as a pedagogic device.

INSTRUCTOR: Jim, is it a true case of projection if the instructor does it deliberately?

JIM: No, it really isn't his projection. I wonder why we project?

PHILIP: I think we project because we're afraid we can't handle something.

INSTRUCTOR: Why should that bother us, Phil?

PHILIP: We feel we haven't got the skill.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, could you put that in psychological terms? Why should not having skill make us want to project?

PHILIP: Well, because we don't want to be considered foolish or incompetent.

INSTRUCTOR: Is it a matter of disapproval?

PHILIP: Oh, I get it. It's how we feel, and we have to investigate projection on the basis of feeling. Or let me say it this way: we project in order to defend ourselves.

I growled at one of the kids who wasn't very active in moving out of the room. As a matter of fact, he didn't want to go out. So I told him he had to go down to see the principal. And then the principal sent him home, asking that his parents come back to class. The matter turned out to be much more serious than I had anticipated.

INSTRUCTOR: Why do you bring it up now, John?

JOHN: Well, I've been wondering what took place there.

INSTRUCTOR: No, I mean, John, why, psychologically, do you bring that up now?

JOHN: Because I'm interested in finding out whether I acted right or not. I wanted to know if I was projecting my own feelings into that situation.

INSTRUCTOR: You seem to be a little bit troubled about what you did.

JOHN: Oh, no, I'm not troubled, I'm just interested.

PHILIP: John, you feel a little bit sorry about the principal's getting involved in this and causing a lot of trouble, don't you?

JOHN: Sure I do.

HILDA: Look, John, aren't you projecting right now? Trying to

deny you feel guilty? You wouldn't have brought the whole issue up unless you were troubled, I think.

INSTRUCTOR: The fact that John used the word "growled"—he said, "I growled at the boy"—doesn't that show John's projection? If he wanted to help the boy, would he have used the term "growled"? He would have explained to the boy just what was taking place if he had been trying to help him. When you use the word "growling," it means that you're scolding or bawling out, doesn't it?

JOHN: I guess I did go too far. It took me ten minutes to recognize that little piece of projection. I wonder what happens when there is a great deal more at stake in our lives?

STANLEY: That reminds me of last week, when I was talking of parents and children generally. You asked me what I felt guilty about, and I said, "Nothing." Then you let it go. Now I see what was taking place. I felt guilty about what I did to my own daughter and I wanted to bring it up to get rid of the guilt, but instead of talking about myself I talked about children in general because I didn't want to expose myself to the disapproval of the group. Gee, I know that now.

I'd like to tell the group about what I now see as projection. When I grade papers and find myself getting tired after about an hour, I say to myself, "Oh, I know what's in those papers. What's the sense of reading them so carefully?" And then I try to rush through grading the papers. I know I'm projecting. That's my way of excusing myself from putting the papers aside and coming back to them when I'm fresh. Instead of making an effort to do a fair and square job in reading what the kids wrote, I say, "I know what's in there," and then I fly through the papers. I certainly can see that as a wonderful example of projection, and I can think of another example. Today I was at lunch with the teacher who is in charge of the Latin department, and I said to him, "What's the Latin Club doing?" He replied to me, very indignantly, "What's the matter? Isn't there room for a Latin Club?" And then I turned to him and I said, "Look, of course there is. I was simply interested in what the Latin Club is doing." The

Latin teacher, of course, thought I was attacking him. I call that projection on his part.

INSTRUCTOR: This illustrates, doesn't it, how we all project so much of the time. And, of course, there's nothing wrong when we do project.

STANLEY: Especially against Latin teachers.

[Laughter from the class]

JIM: Some more projection, Stanley?

STANLEY: Check.

PHILIP: Incidentally, when we all enjoyed this discussion in the case of Jim's projection of the boy, regarding the fire drill, weren't we all enjoying that because we were getting rid of our own feelings about the amount of projecting we've done in similar cases?

John, Stanley, and Philip perceive rather quickly the nature of projection, just as the reader, who has nothing particular at stake, can easily observe the several projections of the students in question. It is not so easy, however, to catch one's own negative projections when one is emotionally involved and defensive.

Few of us are willing to admit or are capable of perceiving the degree to which we dominate or seek to control others. Heightened sensitivity toward this tendency leads to a more significant understanding of one's specific actions and human relations generally than perhaps any other insight. The professional teacher who respects the individual pupil will constantly guard herself against projecting her "rightness" upon him.

The specific aspects of the professional teaching self we are about to describe characterize the teacher who has traveled a long way in controlling her need to dominate the pupil.

# Some Characterístics of a Professional Teacher

Competence in one's field of knowledge is necessary but not sufficient for skilled teaching. Effective performance requires a pro-

found understanding of what occurs when pupils and teacher meet in a teaching \( \int \) learning situation. What occurs psychologically in the process of interaction between teacher and pupils determines the quality of teaching and learning. The teacher's awareness of how she uses herself and her understanding of how pupils make use of her characterize what we call "the professional self" of the teacher. The remainder of this chapter deals with a series of interrelated characteristics which describe the professional self in the teaching situation.

## 1. Understanding the psychology of learning.

The skilled teacher is constantly on guard against the tendency to project her will on the pupil. She realizes how easily people in any association become the objects of one another's will. She is familiar with the inevitability of resistance to change and the many forms and directions it takes. She understands that everyone makes the effort to avoid the conflict and disturbance accompanying reorganization of self. She knows, however, that, given certain favorable conditions which the teacher can create, pupils can be encouraged to change.

The teacher who has acquired insight into how basic attitudes are developed in family relationships is aware of the mixed feelings and emotions the younger, preadolescent, and adolescent pupils bring to the classroom.

To the degree to which we can acquire insights into the process of childhood development, we become more competent teachers. By "insights" we do not mean merely successful completion of one or several academic courses in "Psychology of Learning" or "Principles of Educational Psychology." By insight we mean a personal assimilation and rich realization of the dynamics of growth and change. We mean that the teacher has worked through, in her own experience, the differences between the specious simplicity of psychological clichés and the confusing complexities of living situations. The teacher uses her knowledge of mental hygiene and clinical psychology as an aid for her creative understanding of each

pupil. Knowledge of the general analytic concepts of personality development is no substitute for the effort required on the part of the teacher to qualify, revise, or discard such concepts when confronted with pupil behavior which does not fit into the neat conceptual framework. The skilled teacher, humbled by her awareness of the complexities of behavior, fits the theory to the pupil, not the pupil to the theory.

2. The skilled teacher offers a professional service to the pupils. She consciously refrains from using them to serve her personal needs.

Each one of us, as we saw in Chapter 10, wants to be loved and approved of. The need for reassurance against felt inadequacy is especially marked in the aggressively competitive culture of our day. Being popular or striving to become popular is a protective device commonly employed against self-disesteem. Instead of seeking reassurance by trying to make friends and become popular, however, the insecure individual can try to dominate and control others. Experiencing power over others shields one from admitting failure of control over oneself.

The teacher is placed in a position which by its nature carries prestige and authority so far as the pupils are involved. The temptation to use the prestige and authority of the position for one's personal needs is ever present. And the temptation is strengthened by the differene in age between teacher and pupils. Furthermore, in any contest or clash of wills, the teacher realizes she cannot lose. The structure of the classroom is thus an ideal setting for the teacher to work out personal tensions. It closely parallels the home, where parents are similarly tempted to use their children as targets for their needs.

To struggle against and gradually to overcome this temptation requires an unquestioned conviction on the part of the teacher that her job is to help pupils, not to be helped by them. Her function is to aid the development of children through her specific skills. She offers a professional service in a professional manner.

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To avoid misconceptions, it is important to note that the way in which this service is carried out qualifies our apparently rigid and formal statement of the teacher's function. Warm friendliness, kindly understanding, a genuine and deep regard for the problems of pupils are by no means excluded. Indeed, they are taken for granted. Teachers, above all else, must care about their pupils. They best show their solicitude, however, by keeping their own anxieties and tensions out of the lives of their pupils. The classroom is not to be used as a clinic for the therapeutic release of the teacher.

An example, recognized by every teacher, will make the meaning clear. Generally, one of the criteria of successful teaching is considered to be the number of pupils who successfully pass the examinations. Naturally, a teacher wants to be judged successful, not only because of the opinions of colleagues but also because evaluations and ratings car promotions and salary increments. How often are the form, content, methods, and duration of instruction determined by the teacher's need to make a good showing on the examination? The pupils are being prepared to build or to maintain the teacher's or the school's reputation. This, it is submitted, is an exploitation of pupils. It does not follow, of course, that a splendid record on tests inevitably implies manipulation of pupils by teachers.

3. The skilled teacher will keep at the center of the teaching process the importance of the pupil's feelings, not her own.

The teacher who brings to the classroom a set of disciplined attitudes arising out of insight into human relations recognizes that she wants to have her way and that pupils want to have their way. She recognizes and feels her own responses and gradually learns to avoid projecting. She will permit pupils to develop at their own individual tempo and on their own level. Since she is engaged in performing professionally, she is not interested in becoming popular or in avoiding negative criticism. She is concerned primarily with understanding and accepting the differences expressed by the pupils.

The following excerpt is taken from the third meeting:

. . .

PAULA: I can't see why the other members of the class should have to listen to a girl who insists on arguing. After all, the children do have to learn the material, and it seems to me a waste of time for everyone to listen to the half-baked ideas of one or two members of a class.

INSTRUCTOR: You think, then, that your own ideas of what is important should control, and that the children must learn the material whether it makes sense to them or not?

PAULA: Well, they do have to pass the examinations.

LAWRENCE: Are the children in school to pass examinations or to develop into mature adults?

PAULA: They are there to learn what they're supposed to learn.

INSTRUCTOR: Paula, do you mean that we, the teachers, can decide what the children really want to learn?

PAULA: Maybe they don't want to but it seems to me they've got to.

LAWRENCE: I don't think you can force kids to learn. They'll memorize answers, but I don't call that learning.

PAULA: Is it learning to allow a couple of kids to monopolize class time by silly argument?

INSTRUCTOR: You feel, Paula, that would be unfair to the rest of the class who want to hear what you have to give them?

PAULA: Exactly. I'm paid to teach them geography, and that's what I want to do, teach them geography.

Six meetings later—that is, during the ninth meeting of the group—Paula declared:

It has been difficult for me to see that a person must be allowed to struggle with a problem and be offered help when he wants it. Previously, the pupils who seemed to struggle with the

material were a source of annoyance, but I have changed on this point.

One girl is a good case in point. At the start of the year she seemed to be a compulsive talker. Other teachers found her unpleasantly aggressive; I made up my mind that I'd listen to her. When she found she was accepted and felt more free to speak her thoughts, she began to argue at any opportunity. Gradually this has disappeared. Just the other day, she stopped after class to tell me that at the beginning of the term she talked a great deal because she was unhappy since she simply couldn't memorize lessons and wanted to make an impression. When she realized I was listening to her, she felt she ought to stop talking and think things out for herself before she spoke. Now, she went on to say, she thinks about what she studies, something she never did before, because I consider what she says important. She enjoys studying for the first time in her school experience.

What accounts for Paula's change in attitude? She was accepted as she was. Her earlier attitudes expressed in the seminar were not condemned by the instructor. Effort was made to appreciate how she felt. Other points of view were introduced by students and instructor. She was free to accept, to reject, or to consider other points of view. Not feeling pressured, she did not have to become defensive. Since no one was insisting that she was wrong, she did not have to fight against an alien will. Not feeling threatened, she was free to become creative in her own way and at her own tempo. She could afford to listen and consider, since she did not have to fight to preserve the integrity of her feelings.

To a professional teacher, ridiculing or being sarcastic to pupils is anathema—violating the dignity of the pupil by public or private sarcasm—is the cardinal sin in teacher-pupil relations. That this is not an uncommon occurrence is demonstrated by the frequency with which students later in their school careers comment on the unforgettable chagrin and deep hurt following such experiences on the elementary and secondary (and college) levels.

The teacher, as a human being, obviously experiences likes and dislikes in relation to specific pupils. Her feelings are what they are. They cannot and should not be denied. They can and should, however, be controlled. This is where skill and understanding enter. Increasing awareness of the will struggle involved in the teaching \( \int \) learning process alerts the teacher. Understanding what is occurring, the teacher is in a better position to struggle to control, not to deny, her own reactions. At times, by professing to the pupils how and why she feels as she does, good or bad, she can make use of her reactions for the benefit of pupil growth. There is no recrimination or vindictiveness. The explanation of her reaction is an additional pedagogic device to help pupil development.

4. The skilled teacher will be concerned primarily with understanding and not with judging the pupil.

The more free pupils feel to express their emotionally sincere reactions to the subject matter or activities in the classroom, the more likely is it that there will be movement toward genuine growth and reconstruction of attitudes. Freedom to express oneself spontaneously is severely limited. The necessity of assimilating the social amenities of civilized society and of incorporating standards of conduct is obvious. Children must acquire a conscience (super-ego), a sense of what "ought to be" as opposed to what they would like to do. The tensions in this ambivalence are labeled guilt or anxiety.

The important factor in the development of conscience is the matrix of experience in which it arises. It is the way in which and the conditions under which parents insist upon or request certain behavior which determine the quality and degree of anxiety children develop. Patient, kindly, quiet insistence elicits a series of acquiescent reactions from children which differ markedly from the traumatic anxieties generated by harsh, furious, threatening, overwhelming parental demands.

Normally, the adult forgets the matrix of experience out of which his superego developed but retains the anxiety and guilt. And these are reawakened whenever others now behave as the adult did in his childhood. The adult often expresses toward others the dislike he feels for himself. He seeks relief by condemning in them what he senses is self-condemnatory. This kind of process

often occurs when teachers moralize about pupils' conduct. Pupils, we hear, are "lazy," "inattentive," "dumb and stupid." "They don't do their work." The teachers who say this, however, are, very often, really telling us something about themselves and not about the pupils.

The professional teacher's obligation is to understand the dynamics of learning and teaching. She must approach her task in a spirit of inquiry, seeking explanations and not distributing punishment or dispensing rewards.\* The skilled teacher is constantly on guard against shifting from the mental-hygienic approach toward pupil behavior to the moral, layman's point of view.

### 5. The skilled teacher accepts students as they are.

The teacher who is interested in understanding and accepting the differences expressed by pupils will inevitably communicate this attitude to them. She thereby frees them to express their real feelings and genuine difficulties. They need not feel ashamed, guilty, insecure, inferior, stupid, or queer. These feelings arise because of anxiety in the presence of threat or punishment resulting from a failure to meet the standards of those who control us.

Problems cannot be dealt with until they are recognized. Frequently, the most important emotional difficulties in human relations are denied, disguised, or rationalized. The individual, consequently, is concerned with resolving problems the real nature of which escapes him. Defenses have to be strengthened to avoid discovery of what lies behind them. Rationalization is built upon rationalization. The basic disturbances are not removed. If the disturbances do not abnormally interfere with one's creativity and satisfactions in professional and personal relations—that is, if one's defenses are adequate for successful living—there is no need to disturb them. One need not look for trouble.

There is much evidence, however, to show that this condition is not so common as we assume. Our society is made up largely of

<sup>\*</sup>The problem of evaluating pupil performance is not relevant to the question of moral judgment by the teacher.

anxiety-laden adults. This is the chief theme not only of the professional literature in clinical psychology, psychiatry, and case work but of modern literature, poetry, drama, politics, and morals. The compulsive quest for "property, prestige, and possession" to allay insecurity and anxiety is notorious. The vulgar din of modern advertising exploits not only fear of illness and the need to be sexually attractive but, more significantly, the American middle-class adult's fear of being different. "Be like your neighbor. Belong to the crowd. Why don't you, too, go now to your nearest neighborhood ——— and get this, that, or the other thing, which every gentleman or lady, or actor or singer or what not, uses? You, too, can be a success."

The public-school teacher indeed has a job! Her task is to help pupils to express themselves, to become unafraid of their difference, to question, to ask for evidence, to disagree, to participate in decision-making, to challenge authority, to want to learn. Pupils must be more free than they are to communicate their real feelings, anxieties, fear, and criticisms. They will feel more free to do so if their teachers accept their differences, if the classroom atmosphere encourages them to be real.

6. The skilled teacher realizes that genuine, significant learning stems from the creative efforts of the individual pupil.

The pupil must discover for himself in the process of learning, as structured by the teacher, what, if anything, he really wants. What takes place between teacher and pupil provides the dynamic conditions which will be used by the pupil in precisely the way he wants to use them. Whatever genuine learning takes place occurs when the help offered by the teacher is willingly accepted by the pupil. The teacher provides the aid, but she cannot motivate the learning. She can communicate to the pupils that it is their course, or class, or project. But they alone must answer the question "What do they want to do about it?"

The present traditional pattern of "learning" does not provide much opportunity or exciting challenge to the positive, creative efforts of the pupils. Most schools emphasize the academic curriculum. The child's emotional development, if attention is given to it at all, remains secondary. The teachers want to fill the minds of pupils with ideas and facts by means of lessons to be "learned." The pupils "take it," and return it.

Under this pattern, the responsibility of the pupil is to take notes, cover the readings, and parrot them in recitations or examinations. The pupil conforms under pressure of authority and grade. There is a minimum of genuine participation.

The skilled teacher, aware of the attitudes the pupils bring to the classroom, can help them to participate meaningfully, not merely verbally. This is what happened in the case of Muriel.

MURIEL: I never thought I'd adjust to this class as I have. I had to plow through myself to reach a point where I can speak without a definite rise in blood pressure, flushing of the face, perspiration, a lump in my throat, and a thumping in my chest because of wanting to say something yet not saying it for fear of being disapproved. I gradually came to realize that I could say whatever I pleased.

### 7. A skillful teacher recreates herself.

The foregoing six characteristics of the skillful teacher (there probably are others which could be included) assume that the teacher is a creative person who has gained insight into the teaching \iff learning process. How is this kind of insight achieved?

The teacher must become involved in a reorganization of her traditional patterns of thinking and feeling, especially feeling. Ideally, every teacher should have the help of a teacher-supervisor who understands how to help her develop professionally. Few state or private teachers' colleges provide the kind of vis à vis super-

vision we have in mind—that is, a series of weekly hour-long meetings between the supervisor and individual teacher during which the teacher, assisted by the supervisor, struggles through the problem of learning how to use her professional capacities. The student-teacher or the practicing teacher brings her teaching problems to the supervisor, who helps the teacher to discover for herself tentative solutions. It is in the process of discovery that insight is gained. The process of self-discovery is the insight.<sup>4</sup>

At present there are very few opportunities for teachers to obtain this kind of individual supervision, but the number of inservice workshops for improving teaching skills is increasing in the schools and college. Many states, independent colleges, and private national organizations have arranged summer workshops for teachers. Our own seminars at Teachers College, Columbia University, were set up to provide, in effect, group supervision of teachers interested in learning more about teaching skill.

In the remainder of this chapter we shall examine the nature of the reorganization which is essential to skillful teaching performance. Since the teacher, herself, must undergo self-discovery, our attempt to communicate what is involved through writing will, at best, merely point to the problems. The reader's reactions, not the writer's statements, are important.

Every teacher, as every adult, is the only expert in his or her life. No one person can live for another. As a matter of psychological health, everyone is driven to justify (project) his attitudes, feelings, and behavior. To expect an adult to deny his own achieved sense of self-hood is tantamount to asking for a confession of failure in living. Nevertheless, this is precisely the risk involved in growth and creativity. In so far as a new integration in outlook and understanding is achieved, the former patterns must be modified or surrendered.

To assume full responsibility for deliberate decision to change is extraordinarily difficult. It is easy to understand why this is so. Decisions are reached only after conflict. Feeling and willing are ambivalent. One part of the self—the constructive, creative self—struggles with another part—the achieved, comfortable, adjusted

self. The side which is to control must perforce deny and defeat the other side. Conflict is inevitable, and no one welcomes conflict.

Behind the internal conflict lies some kind of fear. The traditionally oriented teacher who doubts that all is well, and who at times would like to voice disagreement or even modify teaching practices, fears criticism from superiors. Psychological, and perhaps economic, security are at stake. The convenient and comfortable thing to do is to conform. The dependent self maintains approval through conformity.

Another side of the teacher, however—the creative, independent side—is denied self-expression. This leads to resentment and dissatisfaction. The sensitive teacher feels the split. Rationalizations, protecting oneself against felt dissatisfaction, are easy to find. This is the danger point. Over a sufficiently long period, after one engages in justifying an unwillingness to change and an inability to accept the risks involved, the point is reached at which the teacher no longer recognizes the need to change. The setting and the system outwardly stereotype the teacher, but she remains basically dissatisfied whether she is aware of the dissatisfaction or not. Conflict is concealed but not resolved. The "system," superiors, pupils, colleagues, and parents become targets. The teacher strives to avoid recognizing that the conflict arises, in part, because she refuses to resolve her own will-guilt problem of growth. She tries to hold others responsible for the daily, dull, uncreative routine of teaching. Her attempt is always unsuccessful, because the real conflict lies within her, and she cannot get rid of her conflicting selves.

The teacher, like all adults, must learn to accept inner conflict. She must learn to live with the fear and guilt which accompany dependent or independent willing. The teacher must learn to accept the different aspects of her contradictory and ambivalent personality. She must organically realize the utter inevitability of living with and in conflict.

To accept oneself means to be responsible for one's own decisions, to avoid justifications, projections, and rationalizations. To accept oneself means to express oneself without too much guilt or fear. To accept oneself means also to depend upon and to work

with others, recognizing that they, too, are engaged in conflicts which they seek to deny.

This insight has far-reaching implications for the teacher-pupil relationship. The teacher who appreciates the central psychological problem of all growth, the will-guilt conflict, realizes the interstruggle and intra-struggle of wills, the ambivalence, resistances, and defenses which accompany the projections of every individual.

The pupils' guilt in not meeting the requirements of the teacher is partially allayed by projecting it outward in the form of (defensive) criticism of others, instead of its being retained inwardly, where it becomes criticism of self, accompanied by feelings of inferiority, anxiety, frustration, or hostility. The pupil who is not permitted to project feels inferior because, in so far as he identifies with the teacher, he feels unworthy of her approval. He feels anxious because the support of the teacher with whom he is identified is threatened. He is frustrated because he cannot express his difference. He becomes hostile, since he hates those responsible for denying him self-expression. The understanding teacher, therefore, tries to ease the struggles of the pupils. She permits the children to project their own needs so that their sense of guilt in not meeting her standards is lessened rather than increased.

The teacher tries not to add to the burden of the pupil's struggle by projecting her conflict upon him. Nevertheless, the teacher, too, has the need to express her difference. Indeed, skilled teaching requires creative personalities, the constructive expression of difference.

We seem, therefore, to be faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, the teacher, we have said, should be on guard against projecting her needs on the pupil and, on the other hand, she needs to express her creative difference. What form can the teacher's difference assume other than imposing her will upon the pupil and creating him in her image? The answer gives us the clue to the finest kind of teaching, the creation of a professional teaching self. The teacher uses her insight and difference to recreate her teaching self.

The living experience of every individual constitutes a dynamic

whole within which the self is continually being reorganized. When the specific organization of the self is more or less threatened, there is a proportionate rush of feeling or emotion. The sense of wholeness is lost. It can be recovered only by getting rid of the discomfort. The discomfort must be outwardly expressed or struggled with internally until a new sense of wholeness is achieved.

The teacher projects the disturbance of one part of herself onto another part of herself. That is, she criticizes herself, not the pupil. Her will conflict between wanting her way (projecting her personal image upon the pupil) and wanting to help the pupil, her professional job, remains internalized. Her reorganization, her new sense of wholeness is achieved not through taking out her discomfort on the pupil but through a positive change in herself.

A deepened understanding of the psychological conflict involved in the process of change and growth strengthens the teacher in disciplining herself. The need to be defensive, to protect herself from herself, to be "right," is considerably reduced. She accepts herself. She lives with her own conflicts, deals with her own ambivalence, and assimilates her own guilt. She develops a professional self; that is, she does not use the pupils as targets for her discomfort but permits the pupils to use her for their growth.

Every teacher possesses unused, latent, creative strength to undertake this arduous reorganization of feeling and attitude. Its achievement is as rewarding as the process is difficult. This new kind of teaching is not only a source of satisfaction for the teacher but, more important, a genuine opportunity for growth of the pupils.

Receiving a certificate to teach and being appointed to a position should mark the beginning of new growth for the teacher rather than the end of her professional development. No one devoted to teaching is ever quite satisfied with his or her understanding of the problems of teaching or with teaching performance. The problems are legion. Continuous development and inquiry and doubt and partial success and recognized failure are all part of genuine concern with one's profession. Professional discussion with colleagues in a spirit of mutual help and understanding should be

the order of every day. Communication should be sought with supervisors and principals and superintendents concerning the problems of all. Enlivened parent-teacher meetings concerned with basic problems of the philosophy of education, newer methods of instruction, evaluation, and curriculum content should be led by parent leaders. Much more attention should be paid to how the children feel and what they think.

The time, place, and opportunity for such activities have to be decided upon by each group of teachers. The point is that, without a vital concern with the profession of teaching, little if any of this will occur. The teacher, in time, then finds herself on a treadmill, having lost much of her passion for teaching. To rediscover the joy and satisfaction of the adventure of teaching is a renewal of one's faith in the importance of teachers in a democratic society.

# Problems for Discussion

- 1. Often one hears a parent remark, "I've sacrificed the best years of my life to my family ——." What is the nature of the "sacrifice"? Hasn't the parent done precisely what he or she wanted to do? Why, then, call it "sacrifice"?
- 2. Is there anything psychologically unsound about the common expression "If I were you, what I would do is ———."?
- 3. Can any pupil "misbehave," or is all behavior what it has to be?
- 4. A pupil charged with disrupting the work of a class is given detention for a week. The teacher remarks, "I'm sorry to do this but I have to teach you to behave yourself." Why do you approve or disapprove of this procedure?
- 5. Some pupils, it has been observed, simply do not want to learn. Do some teachers simply not want to teach?
- 6. Can a teacher be highly skilled and have a record of fifty percent failure in the final class examination? If every member of the class of thirty successfully passes the final examination, is the teacher necessarily highly skilled?

- 7. Do pupils, at times, make the teacher angry or does the teacher permit herself to become angry? How can the teacher learn to deal with her anger? For example, several pupils had been whispering while the teacher was explaining a difficult theorem in plane geometry. Other pupils were annoyed at the whispering, and the teacher's control was being sorely tried. What is happening psychologically? How would a skillful teacher deal with this situation?
- 8. Do you feel that your own biases derived from the social and economic class to which you belong affect or will affect your judgment of your pupils' differences? Are you aware of any ethnic, religious, or social points of view you hold which will block your acceptance of the different points of view of your pupils?
- 9. Can a teacher transfer her insights and experience to the pupils?
- 10. Does one necessarily learn from experience? Furthermore, may not additional experience confirm bad habits?
  - 11. What is involved in recreating one's self?

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### Chapter Twelve

# The Propositions of Modern Learning

HE PAST FORTY YEARS of work in the allied fields of psychiatry, mental hygiene, child guidance, clinical psychology, and social case work have revolutioned the understanding of personality development. Even though we have scarcely scratched the surface in exploring the complexities of personality formation, real progress has been made in revealing new horizons and different dimensions. The radical character of the change lies in the approach rather than in the content. We are beginning to ask new questions and to formulate different kinds of problems. In brief, a new conceptual framework has been, and is in process of being, developed.

The impact of this new approach on education has been felt but has not as yet reached down into the majority of teachers' colleges of the country. Many books, texts, and monographs in education use the newer language, but the full implications of the concepts for the teaching \in learning process have not been made clear. The relatively few teachers' colleges in which a genuine attempt is made to communicate the new approach to teaching and the relatively few schools in which real effort to put it into practice is made stand out in sharp contrast to the more traditional schools of the country.

It may be helpful, therefore, to bring together in a single chapter some of the basic propositions supporting the new teaching ⇔learning process which have been described in this book and which are derived from the clinical studies of personality development. The following list of propositions has, in varying degree, a great deal of support from inquiry that is psychologically, sociologically, and psychiatrically oriented.¹ Each proposition is, of course, only a partial aspect and statement of the purposive striving which characterizes genuine involvement in a learning situation.

### 1. The pupil learns only what he is interested in learning.

This assumption seems so obvious and simple that one wonders why it requires discussion. A close examination will soon reveal its complexity. Let us start with a current axiom in education, "The pupil learns by doing." We immediately raise the question "The pupil learns what by doing what?"

An individual does not necessarily learn by doing. He is more likely to learn by doing if what he is doing interests him. One always does what one wants to do. But what one decides to do must be distinguished from why one decides to do it. The choice must not be confused with the reasons for the choice. Suppose, for example, that a pupil is required to study the distribution of minerals in the United States. There is no inherent interest on the part of the pupil in the problem. The pupil, in fact, dislikes the task. There are many more interesting matters which attract his attention. He is interested, however, in competing with other pupils for prestige, in getting grades as good as or better than those of a brother or sister. The pupil is interested in passing the examination for prestige, not in learning about the distribution of minerals. The focus of interest is a chief determinant in the quality of performance. In our example, the pupil's orientation is toward answering the teacher's questions, passing the examinations, and achieving the resulting prestige, not toward the problems, economic, social, or political, involved in such study.

Moreover, in studying the distribution of minerals, or any other subject, merely because it is required, the pupil acquires many bad habits of study. The pupil does not follow through interesting leads, since inherent interest is lacking. Superficial memorization of external data, the minimum requirement to get by, will do. Again, being required to study materials or engage in activities alien to his vital interest sets up in the pupil resistance and blocks to the materials which are difficult to overcome in later years. How many adults, for example, who as children were compelled to study algebra and geometry push aside a relatively simple statistical table? A person learns best when he has his own purposeful goals to motivate and guide his learning activity. For genuine learning to occur, the pupil himself must see the reason for studying and recognize the value the data have for his goals. This is illustrated in the relationships of several teachers in our seminar to their supervisors.

The following excerpt gives us their different reactions to a super-visor's attitudes.

all looked forward to it. We came to the workshop and we were amazed. She started lecturing to us, and we didn't like her authoritative, dominating attitude. We were terribly disappointed. A few of my friends and I were interested in teaching arithmetic along some of the newer lines. I asked the supervisor, "Aren't we going to discuss these new methods and have a chance to tell everybody what we think?" We weren't given the chance, so some of us dropped out of the workshop.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, that wasn't much of a help. Our problem is:

How do you help your principal or supervisor to understand what you're trying to do?

ELIZABETH: The other day I said to her that I wanted some help and that some of my friends wanted help on the new way to teach arithmetic but we felt that we didn't have much of a chance to discuss it at the first few meetings and wouldn't she want to give us a chance to help us by hearing what we had to say. And she said, "Of course." And we plan to go back and work on this at the worshop with her. We're all quite excited about it.

If what one does follows directly from wholehearted interest in the doing rather than from indirect results or objectives, learning is more likely to take place. Significant learning is a function of personal goals.

2. It is important that the pupil share in the development and management of the curriculum.

Volumes could be written, and, indeed, have been written, regarding this important proposition.2 Outstanding leaders in edu-

cation (W. H. Kilpatrick and his students, among others) have argued for years about the need for curriculum change. Leading state teachers' colleges have special divisions or departments concerned with curriculum development. They all emphasize the need for pupil participation in developing curriculum content. Most teachers have read some of the literature or have attended "courses" dealing with the problem. Nevertheless, most primary and secondary schools in the country (except for the first few grades in the elementary schools) maintain a fairly rigid curriculum handed down from above and imposed upon the pupils. Even where there is acknowledgment of pupil participation, the so-called participation is nothing more than the teacher's manipulation of pupils so that what she wants them to do seems to originate with them.

Unless pupils share in shaping the direction of their learning, it is unlikely that there can be, by definition, purposeful self-direction. Intelligent behavior requires purposive planning. Children cannot learn how to plan and manage unless they have the opportunity to plan and manage. Children cannot learn the meaning of responsible, democratic cooperation unless they share responsibility and experience the meaning of cooperation.

Under the present arrangements the school administrators try to control the whole educative structure. Methods, materials, objectives, time, place, and final evaluation are generally determined by school authorities. The pupils have little, if anything, to say. The teacher knows the ends to be achieved—that is, she decides what pupils "ought to" learn, during what periods of time, and by what procedures. When one stops to reflect on this, it strikes one as being decidedly undemocratic and certainly false psychologically.

An active pupil with ongoing, vital interests wants to explore and investigate. The teacher is there to help him organize and develop his purpose. Through interaction, they built a changing curriculum. They plan together in light of pupil needs as well as school or community requirements. Pupils as well as teacher suggest resources. Responsibility is shared throughout the activity as well as in evaluation, which is ongoing and part of the learning experience.

A few simple illustrations will perhaps convey more of the meaning of pupil participation than the abstract analysis. The school readers designed for the younger pupils describe the early cave man. Apart from the fact that the historic treatment of the cave man in these readers is questionable, why not encourage the children to discuss the milkman, policeman, and fireman if, and when, they show interest? Instead of only teacher-arranged trips to museums, which are so often dreary, dull, and tiring (although far more rewarding for most pupils than the use of printed materials), why not, at a time when children show interest or can be stimulated, suggest and help them to set up their own museum? \*

Note, in the following exchange, how the instructor seeks to encourage the members to share with him in the determination of the content of the meetings. About twenty minutes after the beginning of the second meeting of one of the seminar groups, the following exchange occurred:

NANCY: I don't think we are really talking about meaningful problems. We don't know each other very well. We're trying to build a common language. I don't think we've made a single point once this evening.

INSTRUCTOR: Perhaps we feel a bit uncomfortable in one another's presence.

NANCY: That's exactly what I wanted to say. I think we're afraid of the impression we're going to make on each other.

NED: I think that's so. We're feeling out each other.

INSTRUCTOR: And, perhaps, wondering, too, what I think of it all? HARRY [turning to the instructor]: I'd like to know what kind of meeting we're having.

<sup>\*</sup> Some readers may know the story of the young miss, seven years of age, whose class had been taken to visit and observe the Grand Central Terminal in New York City. When asked by her father that evening at the dinner table, "And tell me, dear, what did you see at Grand Central Station?" she replied simply, "A kitty." This is no condemnation of the field trip as such. It means that the trip was, probably, poorly led.

- INSTRUCTOR: I guess the kind you want. It seems to me all of you are quite in order trying to discover what you want to do. It is your meeting, and therefore I feel each of you should feel perfectly free to offer suggestions or criticisms.
- HARRY: You haven't proposed any plan, and I just wonder if we know what we're talking about or what to talk about. All you did was to indicate to us that the question we had decided to consider was how one becomes a skilled teacher and that's all. I don't think any of us knows how to look at the problem.
- NANCY: Isn't this exactly what our pupils are like in the class-room? They come in and want to be told what to do and wonder what they are supposed to do, and, unless they are told, they won't do anything.
- INSTRUCTOR: All of us, I think, would agree. Let's be patient with one another, take time, and see whether we can't decide on the issues which each of us considers important. Perhaps we'll discover some common problems.
- JIM: I think we all have questions, but we're waiting for someone else to raise a question.
- DAVE: I think what Jim just said is that he's afraid of being disapproved of.
- NANCY: I think we're behaving like our kids in the grade school on Monday morning. Everybody sits back and waits for somebody else to do something. Everyone's afraid of everyone else.
- JERRY: I find that in my classes on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. [Laughter]
- INSTRUCTOR: I don't mind confessing I'm a little afraid, too. Maybe we should explore the element of fear that's been brought up several times.
- HARRY: It's interesting what just took place. I was examining a question and wondering whether or not it would be approved by the group. I suddenly realized that I was thinking I better make a good impression.

The reader has probably noted, in the foregoing excerpt, the fear of disapproval operating. The members are afraid to reveal their uncertainty to one another or to the instructor. Harry wants the instructor to take over in the comfortable traditional manner. The instructor, in his comments, is trying to communicate the feeling that the members are free to structure the meeting as they see fit around the theme of skilled teaching. Several of them indicate that fear and resistance are operating. After Jerry's remark, which released the tension, the instructor suggested a point of departure which the members themselves raised. The issue of skilled teaching can be approached from a number of points of view. This group started where the members wanted to start. The remainder of the evening was devoted to a discussion of the areas they were to explore.

Suppose high-school seniors were asked, and felt free to reply to, what they wanted in their senior curriculum. What would they say? They were asked, and this is their answer: they wanted to discuss vocations, what to do with their leisure time, how their home and family life could be improved, how they could get and hold jobs, how they could learn apart from the resources of books, and what they should believe. And they wanted a share in the management of the school.<sup>8</sup>

Suppose a social-science unit on Personality Development or Human Relations were developed by the seniors and the teacher around these pupil needs? How would this experience, of both teacher and pupils, compare with a traditional social-science course with respect to interest, motivation, pupil participation, amount and quality of work, and results?

The pupil who is permitted to contribute to the conditions and content of his education is creating his material, his organization. He is expressing himself under the guidance, but not the control, of the teacher. He is creatively involved in, and not obliquely concerned with, his education.\*

<sup>\*</sup> The conclusion should not be drawn that pupils alone should determine what they are to be concerned with in their school responsibilities. This was discussed in Chapter 5.

### 3. Learning is integral.

The quality of learning depends upon the quality of the experience one undergoes. Any experience which tends to separate knowing, feeling, and willing cannot result in a sense of completion or wholeness. Fulfillment of purpose is followed by a relaxed emotional tone. Knowing, feeling, and willing flow one into the other and into new purposes.

Genuine learning is not an additive experience but a remaking of experience. Learning is integrative and creative. What is "integrated" and "created"? The experience of every individual must be perceived, understood, and felt as a whole. Every person must uniquely translate whatever he undergoes so that it fits in with his present meanings, needs, and purposes. The pupil cannot be forced into a creative translation of his ongoing experiences. He cannot be coerced to translate materials which he neither understands nor feels. If he is coerced, creativity is blocked and frustration follows. Perhaps this accounts for the repetition of so much subject matter—history, for example—in the elementary school, secondary school, and college. The subject matter is "taught," but it is not really learned.

Learning means that the person synthesizes, integrates, and assimilates during an ongoing process in which his own felt needs are illuminated, his perceptions sensitized, his understanding deepened, and his will crystallized. The dominating quality of such an experience is a sense of satisfying completion. The individual has created something for himself and by himself. Some purpose or problem has been momentarily and creatively resolved. He feels whole.

Classified knowledge, of course, has a logic of its own. There is a synthesis created by author or teacher for purposes of presentation to others. The unity built into books or lectures may be a condition but it cannot become a substitute for the synthesis created by the learner. The pupil who accepts the additive nature of traditional instruction is not unifying his own learning. He is merely an echo of an echo. His knowledge is specious, verbal,

informational, anything but creative, since it is not a part of him but of someone else, superficially added on to him. Bits of knowledge have, in this case, failed to be translated into learning wholes.

The pupil is required, for example, to study the routes of early American explorers, the American Revolution, the difference between acids and bases, compound clauses, the geography of his state, and so on. The several topics have a unity of their own. The teacher can also designate a unity through the statement of a problem. What holds the data together for the pupil?

It is a truism that people learn, if they do, through their own experience. Nursery-school teachers generally operate according to this obvious principle. Once the child passes into the regular classes of the schools, however, other peoples' experiences, become a kind of second- or third-hand experience through which he is supposed to learn. The pupil certainly does learn something. He gains experience, as he passes into the higher grades, in concealing his real feelings or genuine interests. He learns how to avoid or appease authority with least risk to himself. He learns how distasteful and boring most books can become. He learns how to verbalize rather than to face his reality. He substitutes language for genuine feeling, genuine interest, and genuine motivation. He parrots the experience of others because he has little opportunity to create and integrate his own. "Ego-involvement is, as the phrase implies, a condition of total participation of self—as knower, as organizer, as observer, as status seeker, and as socialized being.4

Interest in, attention to, and selection and organization of data occur in the process of living experience. The pupil reacts to and with the material presented. What he accepts or rejects, what he makes his own in the situation, depends upon the constellation of his needs and purposes present at any given time. Without the presence of felt need and impelling purpose, which give personal meaning to a situation, the pupil merely goes through a mechanical, routine performance.

Learning to write English well, for example, cannot be determined by the teacher's or by an author's style. Such skill is usually

acquired if the pupil wants to write English well. "The style is the man." Teachers of English particularly, and college instructors generally, ruefully admit that the task of teaching most pupils to express themselves well through the spoken or written word is almost hopeless. The principal reason should be obvious: The pupils do not care. Whatever the reasons, the pupils feel no need of their own, and genuine motivation cannot be imposed or drilled into anyone. The pupil learns only what he wants to learn.

# 4. Learning depends upon wanting to learn.

This assumption is closely allied to the preceding one—namely, that learning is integral. Let us continue with the illustration of writing English well. What, for example, determines the choice of a phrase in a pupil's English composition? One approach frequently used in high school is to assign pupils a list of synonyms and antonyms in sentences. The average pupil dutifully compiles the sentences, frequently calling upon an older brother or sister or his parents for help during the homework. How much more effective would the pupil's choice of words and sentences be if the situation being described were perceived by him and he wanted to express his perception. The felicitous choice of a phrase flows from the spontaneous expression of pupil interest. The pupil wants to express himself.

Pupils do want to learn. They want to learn about what interests them. They want to learn how to control their tempers, how to get along with one another and members of the opposite sex, how to be more comfortable when expressing themselves before a group, how to improve their relations with their parents, how to accept negative criticisms more graciously, how to improve their personal appearance.

An objection may be raised that these problems deal only with the personal and social relations of the pupil. "Only?" What other problems can compete with or are more important than the personal and social relations of pupils? The names of the counties in the state? The source of the Nile River? The Louisiana Purchase? The characters in Scott's *Ivanhoe*? Euclid's axioms? The diameter of Saturn?

The inference is not to be drawn that economic geography, geometry, constitutional history, comparative literature, or any other formal discipline or applied subject matter should not be considered. The issue is: "Does the pupil need to or want to learn that discipline?" The problem is: "How can the teacher encourage the pupil to want to learn?" It is pointless to compel the pupil to "learn" what he does not want or is not ready to learn.

Romeo and Juliet, Helen of Troy, and Paris may be magnificent and highly artistic portrayals for the mature, sensitive reader or teacher. But unless the ground work is carefully prepared with the pupil, the artistry of Shakespeare and Homer cannot compare, in the pupil's judgment, to the idiom of Frankie and Johnnie. Encourage the pupils to tell why the Frankie and Johnnie ballad is so "marvelous." Inquire how it differs from Romeo and Juliet. Lead the pupil to want to explore the differences and likenesses. He will want to if his interest is alive.

Children love jigsaw and crossword puzzles. They realize what the final objective is, and they know, more or less, how to go about achieving it. Algebra and geometry are elaborate, refined puzzles and offer delightful rewards. Mathematics can be made lots of fun if the pupil wants to learn mathematics. He will not want to unless he perceives what is involved. It is quite likely that distaste for arithmetic, algebra, and geometry results from poor instruction rather than pupil incompetence. The teacher too often starts with her interest, not with those of most of the pupils. Patient inquiry during the first few days or weeks concerning what bothers the pupil, giving him full and free opportunity to express himself about felt confusion concerning basic concepts, and helping him to work out for himself correct solutions lays the groundwork for a vital interest in wanting to move ahead and learn. Even calculus has been successfully taught in many high schools where it is an elective.

Here are a few examples of how several teachers, aware of

the importance of wanting to learn, tried to encourage their pupils. At the same time, they recognized that the teacher cannot always depend upon self-motivation.

JIM: Have you ever watched your own children play? Aren't they constructive?

ELIZABETH: Yes.

JIM: Well, then, why don't we, in the social-activities program, allow children to play in their own constructive way?

limits have to be drawn. There is a factor of time, and there is a factor of efficiency. Then there is a difference between very young children and older people. Older people have a wider range of activities. Their motives are more crystallized. They can make better choices, and I don't think children should be left alone so much to follow their own bents and directions. Young children don't really know what they are going to need, and there has to be much more direction than the more progressive schools have given.

JIM: No, I'm not talking about letting them do everything themselves. I'm talking about their starting point. The starting point should be their interest.

INSTRUCTOR: Isn't this the fundamental problem here? Can anyone motivate anyone else, make them learn, if they do not want to learn?

JIM: All right. Let's take a specific example. Suppose at the end of two months you said to the fourth-graders, "Children, there hasn't been very much arithmetic learned, has there? Now, I think we've got to learn some arithmetic for the remainder of the semester." Nancy, what do you say, is that all right?

NANCY: Well, I don't know. if the children hadn't learned any arithmetic and they were given reasons why it was necessary to learn the arithmetic, I think most children would understand that, at least, you give them the chance to tell you how

they feel. They have to play some part in what is going to take place. I had a little boy, Dickie, who just would not do the arithmetic work for me,\* and I said, "Very well, Dickie, if you don't want to learn arithmetic, you won't learn it. I know a little boy who would like this workbook, and if you don't mind, I'd like to take him yours at the end of the week." Dickie was puzzled. When the class was over, I said to Dickie, "You know, Dickie, I'm sorry you don't feel like studying arithmetic. You see, you'll pass everything else, and then you'll go on to the next grade, but you won't know arithmetic, and I think you're going to find that's going to be too bad, to have to come back to this class next year and study some arithmetic." Dickie had a cousin in the class. He came up next day and asked me for the book. He said he wanted to be with his cousin next year in the class and he thought he would study the arithmetic. There may be any number of reasons, but what's important, I think, is that Dickie was helped to want to study arithmetic.

INSTRUCTOR: Suppose he had not wanted to?

STANLEY: It seems to me the generalization is that the needs of the children must be determined by their own interest but also by the interest of society, and somehow they have got to be put together.

INSTRUCTOR: The question is, how?

JOHN: I don't think that giving children reasons motivates them.
INSTRUCTOR: You mean, John, that if you told a twelve-year-old
who doesn't want to practice the piano that she'll be sorry
later on, and you gave her sixty-five reasons, she would still

not want to practice.

JOHN: Indeed. But I still feel that you can appeal to the interest of a class, why they think they should study something, and that they would understand. Well, now look, you don't wait

<sup>\*</sup> Nancy's expression, "Dickie would not do the arithmetic work for me" is of interest. The "for me" reflects, probably, that part of Nancy which needs to control the pupil. Were she really convinced that the pupil had to make the decision, she would not have added the "for me." Furthermore, Nancy's remarks are threatening.

for a two-year-old to run across the street; he'll get hurt. I grant that we'll get better learning if the youngster initiates his own study, but there are times when that simply is impossible. The age of the child and the importance of the subject make a difference. I think we've gone overboard criticizing authority. We reach a point where we say that children don't have to learn anything except what they want. That is just as bad as the old authoritarian approach. I think it's a mistake to be for progressive education or against it. There are many facets to learning. I refuse to be shoved into an either-or position. Sometimes a carefully thought-out plan for the day should be thrown to the winds because the interest of the children is keyed up to discuss something they want, and it has some kind of relevance to your over-all plan. For example, a blind man spoke at our assembly today and for two classes we discussed certain implications of that speech. Tomorrow, on the other hand, we will continue with the objective of this class planned at the beginning of the year. I think the teacher's skill comes into play in having a flexible plan, knowing how and when to gear the children's interests to various parts or areas of the study. We ought to have more imagination.

John has stated the matter in a nutshell. "We ought to have more imagination." Teachers who are convinced that the most constructive learning flows from wanting to learn will be on the alert to try to discover approaches to subject matter which are close to the interest of the pupils.

The assumption that learning depends upon wanting to learn can also be appreciated by considering a fundamental misconception of the vocational-guidance movement. The batteries of tests reveal, let us say, that pupil A scores high in the field of engineering and pupil B very low. Should the vocational counselor, therefore, direct A into engineering and B away from it? Suppose A wants to enter personnel work as a career and B wants to become

an electronics engineer. How much weight should be given to the drives of the pupil in the absence of high aptitude? Contrariwise, how important are aptitudes if interest and motivation are low? To what extent are aptitudes "givens," and to what degree may they be developed as a product of genuine interest and driving motivation? To what extent will ability be exercised if the individual is not interested in performance? (We are aware that degree of interest and test scores have a high correlation but we are here considering the cases in which the correlation is low.)

The more alert vocational-guidance counselors are aware of these problems. In addition to scoring aptitudes and obtaining profiles, therefore, they use interviewing to discover what the pupil wants to do. Apart from the "talented" pupils, abilities or aptitudes in most directions are widely distributed among normally intelligent pupils, or the potentialities for development are present. Whether the potentialities will be realized depends primarily upon whether the pupil wants to learn. How many readers regret not having continued their early musical education? Few would have become world-famous performers, but almost all would give a great deal for the satisfaction of self-expression through music. What happened? For whatever reasons, in most cases, they did not want to practice. Learning depends upon wanting to learn.

# 5. An individual learns best when he is free to create his own responses in a situation.

This assumption is implicit in the four preceding assumptions. Let us look closely at the usual procedure in the classroom. The teacher assigns work. The assignment has a logical place in the organization of the materials as viewed by the author of the text, or the teacher, or both. The end product or objectives of the materials as seen by the teacher, however, have little significance in the ongoing present experience of the pupil. The teacher is interested in presenting a certain amount of data rather than in discovering its functional meaning for the pupils. The following excerpt is an apt illustration.

ELIZABETH: Let me give you an example of what I mean. Some of the teachers and the supervisors met today to discuss certain topics. We, the teachers, had chosen those topics during the summer. We wanted to discuss curriculum changes. Now what happens? Our supervisor mentioned a topic that she thought ought to interest us, and for the next two hours we talked about the topic which she said we ought to be interested in. I'm wondering if we don't do that same sort of thing to our pupils? The supervisor certainly has a way of motivating us, she thinks. Specifically, the supervisor was interested in the topic of how to improve the morals of the children. As you know, the papers have been filled with news about drug addicts among the teen-agers. We teachers, though, are interested in changing the curriculum regarding social studies. Well, we had to spend all of our time listening to what the supervisor was interested in, rather than in discussing what we were interested in, what we came to that meeting to talk about. The supervisor was the only one who spoke during the entire meeting.

NANCY: In effect, what we're pointing out is the actual authoritarian attitude of the teacher. You weren't able to discuss what interested you, and you weren't interested in what she talked about.

From the learner's point of view, there are no future or deferred values in the data. His present experience is the only experience he undergoes. He interacts with the teacher, the other pupils, and the data in light of immediate meanings. What meanings? To answer this, one would have to hear from the pupil. How does he define the present teaching \iff learning situation? What tensions or pressures does he experience? What is at stake? What and whom does he fear? What use is he now making of the data? Does he reply to the teacher's question with the answer she wants and expects? Is he competing with classmates for her favorable opinion or for their deference? Does he feel free to respond to the situation in a spontaneous, creative way? Is he free to select, direct,

modify, criticize, or reject what he sees or hears in his learning situation?

Unless the teacher-pupil-group relations are characterized by mutual respect for difference as well as likeness, the pupil will fear expressing himself. He will not risk revealing his confusion, uncertainty, boredom, disagreement, or sometimes, his enthusiasms and insights. Unless the pupil feels free to respond in his own way, he cannot creatively integrate into his immediate experience what is being presented (see Chap. 8).

The pupil exists in a continuous stream of experience of which he is the center. He interacts only with those experiences which at any given moment can be used by him, to serve some need. He alone consciously judges or dimly perceives the meaning and impact of his experience. From the point of view of others—of the teacher, for example—he may misinterpret or misperceive or distort. This cannot readily be discerned unless the pupil is free to communicate his judgments and perceptions, whatever they are. He cannot learn to modify or change his habitual responses unless he is willing to share with and communicate to others how he really feels, perceives, and thinks.

Each of us, in brief, perceives a private world which constitutes reality. That the individual's perceptions are biased, distorted, and self-justifying is a commonplace observation. In order to check individual perception against social perceptions—that is, against the situation perceived by others less involved emotionally in the experience—the individual must feel free to react sincerely and to communicate his genuine response. The teacher cannot help the pupil unless she understands his frame of reference. The pupil will not share his ideas, feelings, and beliefs unless he feels unthreatened and comfortable in his relations with the teacher. He learns best when he is free to respond in his own way.

Every individual tends to protect his core personality by an "envelope" whose contours coincide with the attitudes held by him at any given time and in any given situation. "The envelope . . . is the *process* [italics ours] that stands between the individual's development and the environmental pressure. It is the individual's

means of protecting himself from the social trends, or of utilizing them to enrich and work out his goals." <sup>5</sup> Any genuine learning experience must be directed to the felt needs and purposes of the pupil.

### 6. Learning depends upon not knowing the answers.

Knowing an answer without recognizing the problem blocks understanding and discovery. Unless the learner faces a problem and is challenged by it, the solution can have little learning value.

Recognizing the relations between principals, hypotheses, and practice is the important difference between a vocation and a profession. A service-station attendant, let us say, knows how to change the motor oil in an automobile. He has acquired practical skill over a period of time. Suppose the car owner asks, "Why do you change the oil?" The attendant replies that the oil is dirty. The owner wants to know why dirty oil should be changed. The attendant answers, "It's not good for the engine." Should the owner persist with "Why not?" the attendant might say something about scored cylinders or carbon deposit. The attendant thinks he knows the answer, but he doesn't even recognize the problem. The problem has to do with the various hypotheses which might explain the destruction of the metal walls of the cylinder. There is no agreement on the part of automoitive engineers regarding this. Some evidence points to temperature changes in the cylinder walls as the chief factor. The point is that the attendant does not possess a body of general principles which enable him to extend, modify, or alter his practice so as to increase learning and acquire greater control over his practice. There can be no meaningful answer to a question which does not arise. For a solution to be significant, the problem must be stated.

The history of science is replete with the value of the unexplained and unexpected. What cannot be explained by the currently accepted scientific laws is precisely the point of departure of scientific pursuit. Science discovers solutions by explaining error, exceptions, and the unexpected. This is the situation in most classrooms. The ordinary English, history, or mathematics class, for example, deals with answers which have little significance to the pupils. Pupils are not interested in outcomes because they are not involved in any real questions. Pupils are interested in knowing answers to the teacher's questions—in order to satisfy the teacher. This, naturally, makes it difficult for them to learn. They know the answers to questions which they do not raise. To learn, they need to raise their own questions, whose answers they do not know. Being involved, they will want to discover, if they can, how to get rid of their dissatisfaction or how to satisfy their curiosity.

The teacher, aware of the spark of self-directed motivation of the pupils, will encourage the will to learn. She starts where the pupils are, not where she would like them to be. A group of pupils showing interest in a common problem meet with her. How do they want to proceed? What materials or resources do they think they will need? Which pupils want to do what? Who is to decide?

These are the kinds of problems of procedure and content which the pupils see as their own. One could say almost with certainty that the children would be genuinely involved, since they would be creatively expressing their real selves. Group cooperation, learning to work with others, learning to assume (without being coerced into) responsibility, wanting to discover, and wanting to put effort into the discovery are products of self-initiated inquiry on the part of the pupils.

### 7. Every pupil learns in his own way.

This statement is proclaimed in theory as often as it is violated in practice. Teachers know that this is essentially sound, yet they set up standard assignments, procedures, and criteria for evaluation. There are no *living* average pupils. An "average" is a quantitative, mathematical, abstract concept. Every pupil is different. His differences constitute his individuality. Every pupil has different tensions, needs, creativity, imagination, and abilities. The individual who is blocked in expressing himself will experience frustration, tensions, and anxiety. This interferes with constructive learning. If he doesn't feel like expressing himself and is coerced into it, he will also experience hostility, aggression, and anxiety, all of which block learning. Pupils should be permitted, much more than they are, to develop at their own tempo and in their own way, within the limitations of time, size of class, and external requirements.

It follows that the teacher who accepts this point of view will not expect the same outcomes from all pupils. Each pupil takes from his school experience what he wants and is able to take—no more and no less. To bribe, coerce, threaten, demand, or punish children (by poor grades) as a way of getting them to "learn" is to destroy their will to learn creatively. The pupil's difference is submerged and denied. He does not genuinely learn what the teacher wants; instead he conforms to the classroom ritual and routine. He does learn how to avoid an open contest of wills, how to keep his real feelings and interests from being trampled upon by an alien will. The pity of it is that the pupil wants to be helped to clarify his feelings and ideas but is discouraged.

How strange a conclusion we reach! The teachers are largely responsible for the pupil's not wanting to learn. Teachers want the pupil to learn in their way, not really accepting the fact that every pupil learns in his own way.

This does not mean, we emphasize again, that a school class-room is to be changed into a clinic. There is a reality of school requirements; there are legitimate problems which pupils find difficult to overcome, and which they need to learn to meet. Opposition, challenge, and struggle are all-important elements in growth. It is the manner, the way, in which teachers use the external requirements to help the pupils which is in issue.

A striking example of what can happen if a student is encouraged but not coerced is found in a written statement by an older teacher who had not participated very much in the first six meetings of one of the seminars. In the seventh meeting, she was rather active. After the meeting, the instructor privately remarked on the change of pace on her part, which all had observed, and on

how satisfied she must feel in coming to grips with herself. Two days later the following written comment was received:

For the past few weeks I haven't said much in our meetings. I felt stupid, inadequate, and didn't understand what was going on in the class. I think I've discovered the basis of the despair. I hated to expose my feelings and thoughts. I was afraid to appear ignorant in the class. I somehow felt that since I'm older and have taught many years, I should understand at least as much as the other members of the class. But I didn't, so I withdrew in my shell.

The class spirit is such that I could speak if I wanted to. But I felt very insecure. Once I discovered this, I realized I was no genius. There's lots I can learn, and our class is one place to learn. That's why I'm in the class.

Last week you noticed how many times I asked for explanations of what others said. The whole evening was exciting. I don't know what will happen in future meetings. I do know that last week was the first time I left a meeting without a headache. I guess that's the pay-off for trying to be honest with myself.

One wonders how many thousands of pupils experience similar feelings of inadequacy in the competitive classrooms of the country's schools. If teachers insist that the performance of such pupils be judged solely by standards set up by the school or classroom teacher, that all pupils "learn" the materials in the same way and in a given time, what quality of learning results? Furthermore, what happens to the pupils' desire to want to learn? What devious forms of resistance to change and what defenses of inadequacy are generated as a consequence of defensively conforming to external demands?

### 8. Learning is largely an emotional experience.

A close examination of the preceding assumptions will reveal that each of them involves how the pupil feels about himself. The feeling of self-esteem is one of the basic attitudes of every person. Self-esteem is a function of interpersonal relations and the intrapersonal affects which flow from them. A very important source

of learning in primary and secondary schools is the relations among human beings. The way one learns and why one learns are of pivotal significance for the pupil.

Nation-wide studies seeking to discover why more than half of the high-school students in the United States drop out before completing high school support what has just been stated. There are many reasons given by the boys and girls for leaving school. The chief reason is that at some time in their high-school careers they were unable to find anyone who would take the time to become seriously and sincerely interested in the things which troubled them. Problems of one kind or another arose, and they did not feel free to discuss them with their teachers (or parents).

It is a commonplace observation made by anyone who attends educational conferences or committee meetings that what is said or written differs markedly from what is practiced in day-to-day situations. The clarification of issues and statement of objectives rarely seem impassioned. Colleagues are usually courteous and deferential. And nothing much is expected by way of outcome. Compare the quality of the usual formal or informal conference of teacher groups with the quality of the intimate comments and criticisms made directly after the meeting by small groups of friends. After the meeting, we become involved and feel free to express our reactions. After the meeting, when we are relatively safe from the formal criticism of colleagues or superiors, our real feelings emerge.

A parallel situation is found in the qualitative disference between the formal or even informal classroom setting of teacher and pupils and the intimate evaluation by the pupils after class. The gap between the ritualistic, official performance of conference speakers and audience, or classroom teachers and pupils, and the subsequent spontaneous expression of participants or listeners is a rough measure of the formality, make-believe, and even conspiracy of the world of official educational doctrine and practice. To express it crudely but directly, all of us agree "to kid" one another. The agreement, of course, is not a conscious matter but an institutional expectation. The official ritual is a protective device against

the explosive danger of exposing one's real feelings and attitudes. To face the real uncertainties, conflicts, and skepticism in ourselves and to examine vigorously the assumptions of current educational practice would be too upsetting. Actually the American school-system order would be threatened. The popular cliché "You've got to go slow" recognizes this situation.

Again, compare the atmosphere of the official parent-teacher meetings with the spirit generated in private discussion regarding the meeting. During the official meeting, feelings are not, generally, spontaneously and openly expressed. Our children have to remain in the school for several more years, and the teacher's feelings had better not be hurt. Later we listen to the parents and their friends in the protective seclusion of their own living rooms. If we had available for analysis tape recordings of thousands of these exchanges, plus the *private* comments of school officials, teachers, and pupils, we would have the kind of data which would reveal the real problems.

We can see, at this point, the role of fear in preventing communication of real feeling and unscreened attitudes. Officialdom—from superintendents to teachers—parents, and pupils express themselves publicly or professionally according to accepted and expected patterns. On whatever level one is, the safe practice is not to get too far out of line. The risks, economic, social, and professional, are threatening. The individual finds it difficult to change because he fears becoming involved, and one does not learn unless one is involved.

If the pupil feels free and unthreatened, if the risks of recrimination and retaliation of authority are reduced, the teacher will more easily reach the pupil, and the pupil is more likely to seek the teacher. We are settling for a make-believe, counterfeit educational experience in which scattered bits of unintelligible and unpalatable facts are tossed back and forth. In this process of "I give it. You take it or else," teachers and pupils agree to kid each other. They bargain. The current coin is the grade. Give me so much back and I'll pay you accordingly.

What happens to the real core of teacher and pupil personal-

ity? What happens to the self-esteem of the teacher? Where is the satisfaction of performing creatively, sincerely, and with dignity? What nourishes the sensitive growth of the pupil's expanding self? The pupil wants understanding, kindness, warmth, help, and genuine expression of real problems, emotional and intellectual.

The way teachers and pupils feel toward each other is the deep and pervasive matrix of all genuine learning and growth. Learning is encouraged when individual difference is accepted. The expression of individual difference is essentially an emotional matter. To feel free to be oneself is the sine qua non of learning. If the teacher wants to help the pupil, she will inevitably communicate her attitude to the pupil. The pupil will ordinarily want that help. In this matrix of feeling, learning is most likely to occur.

### 9. To learn is to change.

The final test of the kind of learning we have been concerned with is found in living, not merely in written or oral statements. Knowledge tests memory; living tests learning. The degree to which attitudes, skills, feelings, facts, ideas, principles, or theories actually change the direction of one's behavior is a measure of what has been learned.

There are, of course, many kinds and levels of learning. Learning to add three and five, to ride a bicycle, to enjoy Bartok's music, to perform surgery, to conjugate irregular French verbs, to be responsible, to raise a family all involve learning of a kind and of a different quality. In every case, what is genuinely incorporated will make a difference. Making "a difference" marks a change in behavior. If learning occurs, the present organization of the individual will, in some measure, be altered. Minimal learning produces minimal alteration. Intensive and extensive learning produce radical reorganization.

What kinds of change accompany school "learning"? What differences, what changes in outcome of student behavior, follow the knowledge experiences of American school children? The question is difficult to answer, because the quality of learnings is so

varied. Minimally, however, learning does not occur unless what is learned can be put to use. Learning has many dimensions: reasoning, memorizing, feeling, acting, expressing, evaluating. These are all aspects of an integral process in which the individual incorporates and assimilates and changes. "No occurrence is an event for us until it has some bearing on our purposes." "Learning is the tendency of any part or phase of what one has lived so to remain with the learner as to come back pertinently into further experience. . . ." "

There is little doubt that more attention is paid by the schools to the empty accumulation of relatively meaningless, isolated, fragmented knowledge than to any other aspects of learning. The other aspects are minimized or overlooked. The situation of the learner, his responsiveness, motivations, capacities, and interests, the quality of his wanting to learn, his sincere acknowledgment of what all of this means to him are rarely emphasized.

Cases can certainly be cited of pupils who "learned" history or algebra without manifesting any real interest in the subjects. The important questions to raise are: "Why was the subject learned?" and "What else was learned?" The pupil may have studied the subject in order to receive a good grade, or to remain in high school, or to satisfy his parents, or to compete with others. Much else, of a more vital nature, is also learned. The pupil learns how to "cut corners," to find answers which satisfy authority, to do what is required rather than to create as one would like to, to develop distaste for what one has to do, and to dislike ideas as he experiences them. The fact that a few pupils seem to benefit even from present classroom procedures does not deny the general observation that most pupils derive little genuine growth under the present emphasis on subject matter.

What remains by way of growth, by way of changed outcome in the behavior of young men and women, as a result of their high-school experience, after they have forgotten their civics, social and physical science, history, English literature, and mathematics? How differently do they think, feel, and act as a direct consequence of their school learning? Have they modified their attitudes toward

race, religion, money, esthetic appreciation, science, community activity, political responsibility? Do they possess a passion for evidence and truth, an understanding of the nature of science and the meaning of democracy, and a will to learn? Do they respect difference in others and behave accordingly? Do they respect themselves and act accordingly? How have they changed as a consequence of their education?

These questions are not easy to answer, but it is essential to raise them. One of the basic assumptions of modern education is that learning makes a difference in the way one lives. Unless the pupils do change, they have not learned.

We can sum up the burden of this chapter in a few words. We are not proposing that the classrooms of the country be turned into playgrounds in which pupils can play "cops and robbers" for twelve years or indulge in fitful fancies of the moment. If a two-year-old trips on the stairway in a home and the "progressive" parents install an escalator to prevent further accidents, psychiatric care for the parents is indicated. The child must learn to deal with stairways even though he prefers being carried. The process is gradual. First, he encounters the gate which bars the passage. This helps him to learn that there is an obstacle. Then he is given a helping hand in making the first initial step or two. He clings to the parent's hand, wanting to explore but still somewhat uncertain. The achievement of climbing the first stairs unassisted is a signal victory. This is followed by a triumphal crawling-walking up and down the stairs.

The classroom presents a challenge. There are steep stairs which the pupil must climb. What are the capacities and strengths and readiness of the pupil? Learning must begin where the pupil is, not where the teacher says or hopes he is. The material, the content, cannot be ignored. That is a reality. The quintessential problem for the teacher is to be aware of pupil readiness, to observe the signs, to understand the feelings, and to extend the hand of sympathetic guidance to lead, to lift, to comfort, to correct, and to challenge. The stairway must be climbed if the pupil is to arrive

at a desired goal. That is given. That some ways are more effective than others to accomplish this must be learned.

### Problems for Discussion

- 1. Why does Chapter 3 bear the title "The Assumptions of Orthodox Teaching" and Chapter 12 "The Propositions of Modern Learning"?
- 2. Do you support the current axiom that one "learns by doing"?
- 3. Teachers, one would suppose, are professional experts in understanding what pupils ought to know and what they should study. Isn't it naïve, then, to support the view that pupils should share in determining and managing the curriculum? How can they possibly now judge what will be desirable for them to know and understand? Take a simple example. Should an eight-year-old studying the piano share in planning what he will study and how much time he wants to give to practicing?
- 4. Is learning to play tennis an emotional, intellectual, or motor experience? Is it an esthetic experience? Is learning plane geometry an emotional, intellectual, motor, or esthetic experience? What differences and similarities, if any, characterize the two learning situations?
- 5. Suppose that, in a class of thirty, ten different projects are suggested by the pupils for the week's work. Which ones does the teacher select? Why?
- 6. A pupil in the classroom feels free to express himself to the teacher. He states that he is not at all interested in and does not see the need for geography. In fact, he dislikes the stuff. What does the teacher say or do?
- 7. Assume that pupils should be permitted to develop at their own tempo. Their individual differences in learning are recognized. As the time for final examination draws close, the majority of the pupils seem unprepared for it. How does a teacher deal with this problem? What assumptions underly your plan of action?

8. As you discuss the questions above, is your learning experience chiefly intellectual or emotional? Are you primarily concerned with the logic of the ideas or the quality of your feeling? What is at stake in the solutions you offer—the growth of the pupils, the threat of a change in procedure, the security of your job, your own sense of adequacy? Are you criticizing the writer? Why?

9. Can one learn significantly without that learning's making

some significant difference in one's behavior?

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#### Part IV

# NEW TEACHERS FOR A NEW WORLD

### Chapter Thirteen

## Teaching for What?

Transformations in Society

The Rights of Free Men

The Rule of Law

Education for a Free Society

The Development of Teachers

We have been concerned, thus far, with an analysis of the teaching \interpretate learning process. We believe that this area represents one of the most important yet least explored aspects of educational practice. Concern with the process, however, must not overshadow the goal it serves, viz., to provide better facilities for pupil growth.

If our understanding of the process has been communicated to the reader, there will also be an appreciation of the fact that the process, product, and producer are inseparable parts of a whole experience. Any teacher who successfully guides the teaching learning process, as we have described it, must be the kind of person who believes in and practices the principles involved. The process will necessarily reflect the teacher, and the product, the pupil, will probably develop differently as a result of learning in a favorable atmosphere.

The teaching \iff learning process does not take place in a vacuum. Teachers and pupils bring their values into the classroom. The classroom is part of the school, the school is part of the community, and the local community is part of the larger state and national organization, which, in turn, is linked in thousands of ways with the shifting international scene. Every school program reflects the conception of life of the community which supports the school. The community—and its official school representatives—may be acutely aware of its educational policies or it may subscribe to custom and tradition.

The American school "system" is a product of and reflects traditional and community values. For good or for evil, our present beliefs must find expression in our public school system. The community, through its organized institutional life as well as through its informal sentiments and accepted values, dictates, or, at least, largely shapes, the content, process, and goals of American education. The power of final decision on what the goals of education should be rests with the organized community forces outside the school. This does not mean that school administrators and the

teaching profession cannot and should not play an important role in redefining goals and assuming leadership in shaping educational policy and purpose. It does mean that teachers should recognize institutional limitations and realities.

The schools are charged with the task of preserving the traditions and values of society. The schools are also charged with the function of developing young people so that our society may be improved and modified values may be introduced. Tension cannot be avoided when sought-for goals conflict with longed-for traditions.

Furthermore, if current traditions are inconsistent—for example, with regard to the attitudes toward a federal civil rights program, the respective rights of labor and management, the foreign policy of the United States, or federal aid to parochial schools—which traditions should the schools support? Which traditions do they support, and why? Actually the solution to these questions is not deliberately sought for by local communities as a whole. In various regions, special power groups aligned with vested interests exert whatever pressure they can to influence the adoption of their views in the schools. The average citizen and the average teacher are not vitally concerned with either understanding or doing anything much about the direction of the local schools.

The reason for this situation is not that the average teacher is incapable of judgment or moral commitment or community loyalty. The trouble is that many teachers do not recognize the nature and extent of the problems. Teachers must understand what they are about. An effective teacher has to be conscious of her philosophy of education, the psychology of learning, her place in the community, the problems of contemporary society, and her moral commitments to personal ideals and community values. The teacher who guides the teaching \leftarrow learning process must be a certain kind of person.

Disciplined knowledge, sensitive perception, and ethical involvement are achieved only through persistent effort over periods of time. No one achieves this once and for all, and not everyone achieves it in the same manner or to the same degree. The quest for greater and clearer understanding and wiser choices of action is a continuous one.

In any case, every teacher, whatever her degree of awareness, does take a position. Every teacher communicates points of view about her fundamental beliefs and loyalties. We submit that the teacher not only may but is obligated to take a stand on various issues. This view does not contradict the approach of this book; on the contrary, it is consistent with our view that the teacher may not impose or coerce. The most subtle form of coercion occurs when the teacher pretends that she is objective when, in fact, she is manipulating relatively unsophisticated pupils toward her own views which she has not presented openly. One is objective when one deliberately presents personal bias and labels it as bias or opinion. One is biased when one holds opinions without, at the proper time and place, declaring them and subjecting them to public examination. Points of view can be communicated in hundreds of ways. Refraining from explicitly stating one's position does not guarantee that attitudes and points of view will not be "sensed."

A brief analysis of major changes in the structure of modern society may illuminate the choices facing us. Gradual recognition of the changed horizons may modify the thinking and feeling of some teachers. Unexamined loyalties can be modified or surrendered when exposed to knowledge and criticism. In any case every teacher should be aware of the nature of her basic beliefs and why she is teaching.

### Transformations in Society

Most of us now teaching have been nourished in a cultural milieu whose basic assumptions have been largely invalidated by advances in knowledge during the past fifty years. A new intellectual climate is developing. Let us note, for example, the changes in the conception of the nature of the physical universe.

Relatively physics and modern research in astronomy are developing views of the physical universe which are more fantastic

than anything Hollywood has produced.¹ Developments in the fields of biochemistry and genetics are revealing undreamed-of horizons. The application of atomic energy for industrial peace-time purposes will have staggering effects on the social, economic, and political organization of modern society. We are at the beginning of the greatest technological revolution in history.

The social sciences, too, have contributed to the recasting of our view of the social world. Anthropology and sociology have disturbed our certainties about cultural development and social relations. The results of the comparative studies of earlier civilizations give rise to uneasy feelings about our purblind nationalisms and provincialisms. Sociological analysis has shown that every society possesses its traditional myths (ideals or ideologies) for which it finds justification. Through many kinds of rituals and ceremonies, it seeks to preserve the sanctity of its mores and folkways. Never before have we had the insight we now possess into the authoritative role of group sentiments and the nonrational character of group values. The concept of cultural pluralism, or cultural relativity, helps us to appreciate the tentativeness of all values and the invalidity of insisting on any absolute or rigid standards. It generates skepticism and humility concerning one's previously unexamined and unquestioned loyalties. (The skeptic, it may be added, rarely makes trouble. The righteous believer, unyielding and absolute in his dogmatic convictions, wields the sword to destroy the unfaithful.)

The physical sciences have disintegrated the foundations of traditional belief regarding the nature of the cosmos and our place in it. The social and biological sciences have crumbled our traditional beliefs about our social and personal relations. The precipitous changes which are now occurring in technology, biology, agriculture, electronics, and chemistry, and which will, without doubt, continue at an accelerated pace, stagger the imagination. Their impact on all forms of institutional life cannot be escaped. Nevertheless, to the discerning spirit, none of the effects need be overwhelming. The changes chiefly concern things, means, and mechanisms. The danger is always present that emphasis on the means of living

transforms them into goals, and life becomes a ritual. The ceaseless quest for the meaning of existence is then confined to the neverending search for things. A free society must rest on an industrially sound base, but economic health is merely a condition of freedom. Man must have bread, but he cannot, as man, live by bread alone. The essence of a free society is found in the visions of men, in their views of what constitutes a good life.<sup>2</sup> This leads us to a brief examination of a few basic values to which American political philosophy is committed.

### The Rights of Free Men

What would American life be like if the right to speak our minds freely, to express opposition, to meet for the exchange of popular or unpopular ideas, to write and to read books of our own choice, were denied under penalty of prison sentence? American life would be much the same as life in the totalitarian countries.<sup>3</sup> Some of us lived through such experiences in Germany and Italy in the mid-1930's, when civil rights and civil liberties of dissenting or minority groups were being extinguished. In our own country from 1942 to 1945, we experienced the shameful internment of the 112,000 loyal Japanese-American citizens.<sup>4</sup> It is not pleasant to remember, but we dare not forget, the utter decimation of the eight million people shorn of all civil and civic rights by the official leaders of National Socialism.<sup>5</sup> Stefan Zweig, one of the leading writers of Europe, fled from the Hitler regime but committed suicide in Brazil in 1942. In an article which appeared after his death, he wrote:

You all know how the tragedy began. It was when National Socialism arose in Germany, National Socialism, whose motto from the very first day was: Stifle everything. Stifle all voices but one. Eradicate all manifestations of free speech, in whatever form, artistic, literary, journalistic—even in the form of simple conversation. Destroy, root out, all freedom of expression.

A few days later this appalling doctrine was translated into practice. Books were burned, scholars were driven from their laboratories, priests from their pulpits, actors from the stage. Newspapers and the right of assembly were suppressed. Men who had enriched European culture by their ideas and works were hunted like wild animals. . . .

Zweig described the destruction of opposition and the silence which followed.

This silence, this terrible, impenetrable, endless silence, I hear it by night and by day, it fills my ear and my soul with its indescribable terror. . . .

It is more nerve-racking, more oppressive than cries or sobs, for at every second I am conscious that within this silence is enclosed the thralldom of millions upon millions of human creatures. . . . 6

The average citizen is not much concerned about civil liberties or civic rights. Popular ignorance about these values jeopardizes the very basis of American life as we know it. Most adults take for granted freedom of discussion and assembly. The informed and imaginative citizen is rightly frightened by what is happening throughout the world. He is aware of the absolute control exerted by dictatorships over the centers of communication and, hence, over the minds and passions of people. Former President James B. Conant, of Harvard University, has declared that free inquiry is essential.

On this point there can be no compromise even in days of an armed truce. . . . Reactionaries are going to use the tensions inherent in our armed truce as an excuse for attacking a wide group of radical ideas and even some which are in the middle of the road. . . . Those who worry about radicalism in our schools and colleges are often either reactionaries who themselves do not bear allegiance to the traditional American principles or defeatists who despair of the success of our own philosophy in an open competition. . . . In a democracy with our traditions only those reasoned convictions which emerge from diversity of opinion can lead to that unity and national solidarity so essential for the welfare of our country.

Diversity of opinion is the lifeblood of a free society. The challenge of minority dissent is the yeast of change. A free people must not only permit but encourage and protect difference. This

is one of the great American traditions and hard-earned lessons. To help millions of boys and girls develop a passionate allegiance to civil liberties is a major educational responsibility of the teachers. But a passionate allegiance is not evoked by memorization of the Bill of Rights. The pupil becomes dedicated to the principle as the teacher helps him to realize the courageous struggle of Peter Zenger, Samuel Adams, John Brown, the Boston Tea Party, Eugene V. Debs, and Governor John P. Altgeld. Through films, plays, novels, and discussion of current attacks on freedom of speech here and abroad, the children can be helped to see the meaning of our civil liberties. Learning to respect and to listen to differences of opinion in the classroom is an important means for developing a loyalty to the right to differ without penalty.

The processes of democratic government—local, state, and national—can be learned through the guidance of a teacher who looks beyond the formal structure of constitutional government. The realities of machine politics, the manipulations and patronage deals, should be presented clearly.\* Fraud and corruption in office and the pressure of interest groups should be dealt with. The developing children can be helped to discern the fact that part of the responsibility lies with the citizen, and that his lack of devotion or understanding permits his exploitation by others. The teacher should, of course, turn to the triumphs of the citizen as well as to his failures. For example, she can show how corruption in official circles is officially investigated and prosecuted as a result of the pressures of the public and the press.

What the books describe and what the teacher states about the liberties of American citizens impresses the pupils less than the attitude of the teacher in her daily relations with them. The meaning of the Rights of Man is best communicated to the pupils experiencing in the classroom the rights and responsibilities of pupils and teacher.

<sup>\*</sup> The telecasting of the Conventions of the Republican and Democratic Parties in July 1952 probably for the first time enlightened millions of Americans regarding the operation of political-party machinery, the struggle for power, the right to be heard, the right of appeal, the right to differ, and the need to abide by the rule of the majority.

### The Rule of Law

No social order is possible without order. The redundancy indicates the basic need for regulations if community life is to be made possible. Without law, there can be no community. The rule of law, interpreted by men, is certainly one of the great achievements of Western society. Our federal and state constitutions are the peculiarly American forms of the rule of law. Constitutional government through parliamentary procedure reflects the magnificent faith of the founders of our Republic in the wisdom of the people. The provision in the federal constitution for the judicial review of the acts of legislatures and executives is a further protection of the liberties of the people. Not even the President of the United States, in 1952, was able to seize the steel companies although he thought he was justified in the light of the emergency. The Supreme Court of the United States declared that there was no semblance of law which gave the chief executive such power.

Laws do not enforce themselves. Laws and regulations are supported by the sentiments of the people subjected to the law. It is the consent of the governed, the ruled, that, in the last analysis, supports the administration of law. Thus, if a majority of the citizens disapprove of a law, they do not hang the legislator or shoot the sheriff. They change the law by electing other legislators. Under the rule of law, then, our laws will be as good or as poor as the knowledge, insight, and moral stature of the majority of citizens.

The record is certainly not perfect. The attacks against civil liberties, the die-hard attitudes regarding the rights of Negroes, the failure to provide an effective program of federal housing, the inability or unwillingness of Congress to heed the reports and recommendations of the Federal Trade Commission regarding the threatening concentration of industrial power and wealth in this country, all leave much to be criticized and to be desired. The important fact is that the demands of social change, the consequences of technological advance, the emergence of a different set of expectations of the underprivileged classes, and the rise of new social forces

have been brought under the rule of law. The American Constitution has been flexible enough to assimilate the profound, revolutionary changes in American life. It is through open parliamentary conflict, through free assembly, free speech, and the competition of ideas and balancing of interests that issues are temporarily resolved through the majority vote of the citizens and their representatives.

What the future will bring no man can say. Whether the American system will be able to absorb the shocks and convulsions of the chaotic world we are living in remains an open and crucial question. The threat of revolution in East and West and the possibility of global war or of decades of defensive cold war place a terrible strain on one's faith in orderly, peaceful change. If millions of future American citizens could be imbued with a passionate belief in the final superiority of law, reason, and compromise as against violence, aggression, and dictatorship, the possibilities of resolving problems through democratic procedures would increase.

The teacher who understands the life-and-death struggle of this basic concept of the rule of law will express and reflect it in hundreds of ways as she guides the teaching \leftarring process. If the pupils are helped to sense its importance in their daily school experience, as well as in the national and international scene, they are more likely to translate it into vital feeling and actual behavior. The rule of law operates in the teaching ↔ learning process no less than in the sessions of Congress or in the United Nations. The consent of those subject to rules must be nurtured and democratically striven for. The governed must understand the sense and purpose of the rules and be given the opportunity to participate in changes which a majority considers desirable. The responsibility for decision must be assumed and the disappointment over defeat assimilated. Thus, the rule of law ceases to be a remote abstraction of political scientists and becomes the living substance of orderly classroom behavior. The pupils learn the meaning of the rule of law by experiencing it. It will not be easy for future dictators to capture the support of future adults who, as pupils in

American classrooms, have daily experienced democratic procedures.\*

### Education for a Free Society

What happens to the 80 percent of American youth which does not go to college? What is the responsibility of the schools in relation to the boys and girls who set out for careers at the ages of seventeen and eighteen? The school authorities know something of what happens five or ten years after high school to the young woman or young man who has not prepared for a profession or vocation. Where effort has been made to obtain this information, the conclusions are rather dismal.

The young people who leave school are scholastically the least able. They have failed in many of their courses. They are psychologically insecure. Many of them drift into relatively unskilled jobs, as shipping or stock clerks, office clerks, service-station attendants, cashiers, waitresses, or fountain girls. A smaller number enter industry as assembly-line workers or laborers. About a third remain on the job for a considerable time but the majority shift from job to job, complaining about the discipline, the poor pay, or the unpleasantness of the work.<sup>7</sup>

The curriculum offerings of the high schools of the country do not, on the whole, reflect the accelerated and revolutionary changes in the life of America or the world, especially since 1941. There is no denying, of course, the need to devote some time, energy, and money to preparing the youngsters who are not going to college with some idea of how they may earn a living. We do maintain, however, that vocational training should not be the chief purpose of the high school. In the first place, the general direction of our technological development calls, at one extreme, for highly skilled

<sup>\*</sup> American educators who have surveyed the schools of pre-Hitler Germany observed repeatedly that pupils never questioned, let alone differed with, the school teacher. He was the dictator in the classroom.

professionals and technicians who can adapt themselves to swiftly changing conditions. At the other extreme, what is needed are workers who can rapidly learn routine jobs. The semiskilled craftsman of former days is being squeezed out by technological invention. Industrial training, retailing and merchandising, automobile servicing, insurance selling, and the like are all offered by the inservice training programs of the companies themselves.

Should the chief concern of the high schools be to train youth in some special technique through which the student can immediately find a job—and probably be stuck with it for many years? What the 80 percent of high-school students need above all else—indeed, what all the students need—is an awareness of the kind of world they are going to live in as husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and citizens.

For the overwhelming number of youths, high school is the end of formal education. Most of the disciplined guidance they receive in understanding how to live with one another they will have to receive in high school. Here is where they can learn about the precipitous changes in the world and the threat to free society. Here is the only place where they can be helped to understand in general outline the contemporary world, the role of science and its import to society, the play of economic, political, and social forces, and the propagandists' fight for men's hearts.

The task of being a citizen is not an easy one. "Training for citizenship," one of the formal goals of education, is supported by all school administrators and boards of education. One wonders, sometimes, what state education departments mean by "training for citizenship." The pupils live in their communities and in their homes; they watch television, listen to the radio, and read newspaper headlines. They possess, they think, few illusions about community responsibilities, "American idealism," the "general welfare of all," "equal opportunity for all," and "equality before the law." They believe this is all "bunk." The important thing is to "know the right guy," "make the proper contact," get an "in," put on a front, and, in time, "you'll get your pile." You start by being

pledged to the right fraternities or sororities or social club. Make the right contacts, in accord with family income.

Unfortunately, much of this is true. But it is only part of the complicated American way of life. High-school students generally do not have the opportunity of judging current events or personal experience in the framework of historical perspective and disciplined ideas. Like most adults, they tend to substitute personal bias and prejudiced opinion for an understanding of the institutional factors out of which bias and prejudice arise. We do not mean that the high-school pupils should be "taught" more American history, economics, or social science as they are generally presented.\* They might be stimulated to present their own views on what is happening in their communities and their own explanations. The skilled teacher would start with the pupils' attitudes and sentiments, not with the formal abstractions of unimaginative textbooks. By careful challenge of their simple rights and wrongs, their "either-ors," their uninformed opinions and outlook, the understanding teacher can lead them to exciting participation in new horizons, new kinds of analyses, different and illuminating approaches to an over-all understanding of American society. A few examples will clarify what we mean.

How many teachers of social science arrange an opportunity for the pupils to visit the courts or the meetings of the city council, or county supervisors? How many projects are set up, with the participation of the pupils, to discover why the voters in the neighborhood do not go to the polls, why the housing authorities move so slowly and so infrequently, why executives of department stores do not hire Negro employees?

<sup>\*</sup>A recent survey (1952) made by the Institute of Public Opinion, the Gallup Poll, showed that forty-five million voters stayed away from the polls in the presidential election of 1948, almost 50 percent of the adult voters of the country. Two thirds of the persons who failed to vote in 1948 did not know the name of either U. S. Senator from their own state. Only four out of every ten knew that each state had two senators. Seven out of ten of the nonvoters could not name the three branches of the federal government. The 1952 presidential vote showed a gratifying increase in the percentage of voters who went to the polls, close to sixty-two million.

Would a few visits to the office of the county agent of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (or a visit or two by him) help the pupils to understand why farming is the biggest industry in the United States, with assets totaling \$143 billion dollars, or how agriculture has changed in the past forty years? They would learn that no industry is better supplied by the government with pertinent data about markets, prices, new methods, and crop estimates. Would a discussion on whether this is "socialism," whether this kind of planning is desirable or not and why, be fruitful? Has the government tried this kind of planning before? Has it worked? Does the Federal Reserve Board plan for the financial markets? Does American organized labor plan? Do the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers plan? For whom, and with what results?

Dramatic participation by the pupils in one problem after another would lead them to an understanding (always geared to their level of sophistication) of American institutions. They would be expressing themselves and their interests. They would want to learn because they were doing the learning. They would be exploring, and they would want to find the answers. There is no end to the number of projects in which pupils can become participant-observers and learn what a free society means. This kind of approach constitutes genuine development in citizenship.

Teachers themselves need to possess the drive, spontaneity, and energy born out of their own conviction that our free society is being challenged and is worth preserving. They cannot, otherwise, light any vital sparks in the minds and hearts of their pupils. They will not possess this conviction unless they understand what is happening in the world and are prepared to commit themselves to areas of participation which their time, talent, and opportunity permit. Teachers, no more and no less than other professional groups, need not become saviors of society, but they can become its servants. Indeed, teaching requires a constant rededication to the infinitely complex task of helping young men and women develop their potential capacities for dignified, varied, full, rich lives, lives filled with joy, confusion, conflict, partial satisfactions, partial

frustrations, but always sustained through the warmth of the perpetual, if at times flickering, light of freedom.

The average teacher faces many obstacles. She finds herself being cautious about her religious, social, political, and economic opinions. Her social behavior, too, is under scrutiny. She must be careful about the books and periodicals she recommends to her students or places upon reading lists. Throughout her professional activities she must present a genteel self which appears to conform to the corroding and stifling respectability of school officialdom, which, in turn, reflects the conventional and unexamined values of middle-class Americans. The teacher's protective, official personality covers completely the core of spontaneity which is the essence of contagious teaching. The passion for ideas is transformed into a farrago of words. The inspiration of the dedicated novitiate is turned into the parochial performance of the oldtimer. The teaching profession too often becomes a comfortable refuge for those whose spirit has departed. It is not to be wondered that many of the more hardy spirits leave the teaching profession for areas in which they can be more themselves.

Many of the obstacles facing the teacher can be removed. The American people can be educated to understand the overwhelming significance of the school in the life of a free society. Parents must understand that satisfactory "grades" in reading or geography, invitations to high-school dances, winning a place on the team, or being appointed to a class committee are the beginning of education, not the result. When will the time arrive when the average parent will be happy to discover that his or her child wants to deviate somewhat from the social average—that the child entertains skepticism regarding the set religious, political, economic, and social stereotypes of the parents? "Is that why we send our children to American schools?" one can hear the parents exclaim. One answer is, "Yes, indeed." Another answer is the query, "Well, perhaps not. Why do you send your child to receive an education?" The parents' answers are not likely to be satisfying either to the parent or to the questioner, because few parents give much serious thought to why the children are in school or to what really goes

on there. Parents, too, need help to understand the tragic character and desperate plight of modern society and the crucial role schools can play in preparing for the defense of democracy in our lifetime.

As our communities become increasingly convinced of the significance of meaningful education in this tragic era, the importance of the teacher will be better appreciated. More money for plant and salaries will be forthcoming. Classes will be reduced in size, staff will be expanded, and teachers will not be overworked.

Our chief concern, however, is not with the many-sided problems which beset a revivified school program. Our main interest, in the present context, is to point out the kind of preparation and dedication required of the new kind of teacher. She is the keystone of any educational program in a democratic society challenged by the world forces of East and West.

### The Development of Teachers

Let us make explicit two central ideas dealt with in this chapter: (1) Teachers need to understand the transformations in modern society accompanying the technological revolution of the midtwentieth century. They need to recognize the need for change in many of our major institutions. (2) Understanding is necessary, but it is not sufficient for effective teaching. In addition, the teacher must be committed to the preservation of the values of a free society.

Whatever else is included in a state teachers' college program, should not emphasis be placed on an understanding of the radically altered society in which we are living? The institutions of America with which we are familiar and comfortable were shaped in the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century agrarian setting. Rugged individualism was required to open the West, private initiative to expand trade and commerce and to exploit the resources of the country. Our civil law was developed to protect private interests and property. Federal legislation protected American manufacture and trade. In majestic isolation from the rest of the world, Amer-

ican capitalism expanded, raised the level of living of the American people and, literally, minded its own business.

The First World War was the beginning of the end of laissez faire liberalism and the agrarian civilization of the United States. Whatever the causes of the War, Western European and American civilization entered a new phase. Finance capitalism and technological revolution, reciprocally influencing each other, were creating a different kind of society. The details of the changes need not concern us. The intensity and breadth of the changes, however, are understood only dimly, by a small minority of people. All of the people of America and throughout the world are affected by the scope of the new industrial age and remain bewildered, confused, and frightened. Possessing neither the intellectual tools nor the factual data, the majority of citizens fail to understand the fundamental changes in the new civilization. Nevertheless, choices have to be made. The implications for education are obvious: an informed people is not such easy prey for propaganda, slogans, and would-be saviors.

The teachers of thirty million future adult citizens require an understanding of American civilization in the present world setting. The curriculums of the early-twentieth-century schools are, in many respects, out of date, as are most of the books and materials. More important, many of the teachers fail to realize the profound changes in the foundation and framework of modern society. The state teachers' colleges are rightly concerned with methods of instruction, content of specialized interests, and administrative problems of schools. These are the machinery of education. What is the purpose? What fundamental conceptions guide the state teachers' college faculties in the use of their skills and knowledge? It is not enough to read the catalogues or to listen to the lectures, which describe the aim of education as the preparation of future intelligent, mature, socially responsible citizens. What do the threadbare phrases mean to the faculty member? How does he conceive these objectives in specific, empirical situations? What bearing have intelligence, maturity, social responsibility, and democracy on the pupil's attitudes toward the United Nations, American

foreign policy, the struggles of labor and management, government regulation, prejudices in his own school, his right to participate in the development of the curriculum, the relationship between the religious and the scientific outlook, the weighing of evidence, the choice of values of an industrial civilization which emphasizes financial success as one of the supreme goals of life?

The teacher guides the pupil in accord with her outlooks and fundamental conception of our society. If she does not possess understanding of the kind of world we have pointed to, she will remain content with the traditional function of passing on sterile, fragmented, lifeless data, and with keeping "order" in the classroom. She will remain a high-grade clerk, reading papers, filing grades, and arranging notes. She will continue the functions of the little red schoolhouse as conceived by its founders—to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. In the early days, little was demanded by way of professional development of teachers. Today the prospective teacher requires a breadth and intensity of development equal to that required by any of the recognized professions. Furthermore, in addition to comprehending the essential features of modern civilization and the threat to the foundations of our free society, the teacher must recognize that teaching is basically an ethical profession. This brings us to our second principal idea.

Our schools are charged with preserving the conceptions of life which we have developed. The chief purpose of education is to pass on the traditions which a free society has fought for over the centuries. But the application of the traditions and principles to the radically altered material basis of contemporary society is not easy. Our very survival, however, depends upon the success and speed with which we can retranslate the meaning of "general welfare," "equality of opportunity," "justice and liberty for all" into a living faith for millions of Americans. A living faith sustains one's commitments to moral, social, economic, and political issues of the day. The "Rights of Man" is a tradition worth preserving only if it is reinterpreted to protect the interests of individuals and groups living in a precarious society. The reinterpretation of our traditions to accord with new conditions and settings is what lends significance and purpose to the whole enterprise of public education.

The teacher is not, of course, a propagandist who should transmit a set of official doctrines of the Right or Left, or a martyr who should insist that only her visions of the good are acceptable. The fate of the peoples of dictator countries is tragic evidence of the adoption of such policy. But it is fatuous to expect the teacher to remain neutral and not to introduce or to deal with any controversial subjects or issues. Neutrality, too, can become a tragic mistake. Every teacher has points of view, whether they are articulated or not. Her attitudes seep through in hundreds of ways—in selection of material, in emphasis, in pitch of voice, in a smile or frown. An "objective" teacher is a corpse, not a sentient human being.

Any issue subject to critical comment and informed criticism, when relevant to the purpose of the pupils in a specific class, not only may but should be introduced. Otherwise the most precious value of American civilization, upon which all other values rest—the competition of ideas in the open marketplace—is destroyed and, along with it, our liberty.

The teacher must believe this deeply and passionately. She must understand the world in which she lives, and she must stand for something in this world. The pupils look to her. What do they see? Does the teacher live by what she says? What are her allegiances? Is she willing to stand up and be counted? Can she live with difference? Does she want to help the pupils? Do they feel her genuine concern for them, especially since she does not impose her point of view? Does she participate in community activities? Do they feel her spirit and her concern about what is happening in the classroom, in America, in their homes, and throughout the torn world?

No teacher can be all things or be everywhere. But every teacher can be something and be somewhere. Can the state teachers' colleges, workshops, and in-service programs of the schools assist the teacher in understanding the great moral responsibility which is properly hers? Should we not give much more attention to the place of values in teacher preparation? We are not referring to attitudes regarding a twenty-four-hour political struggle or a passing labor strike or a current court decision. We mean one's abiding

belief in the conceptions of human liberty, in the essential similarities of all people, in the immutable difference of every individual, in the sovereign dignity of every individual.

The selection and preparation of teachers should be one of the greatest concerns of the American people. It is, in the long run, a more important factor in our survival than the development of the hydrogen bomb. The selection of the teachers of teachers, the faculty members of the teacher colleges, is the vital point of departure for the kind of teacher preparation we are considering. The people of America must understand the dangers facing free society and the role which democratic education can play in meeting and overcoming them. When this is better appreciated, respect for the teacher will increase. Teaching as a profession will be recognized for what it is—namely, the most important profession in American life. No profession requires such combination of skill, knowledge, character, love, and wisdom.

When our citizens become clear about the overriding importance of the teaching profession and convinced of the necessity for a revivified program of education, they will be willing to meet the financial costs it entails. Candidates for every level of education will be attracted. There are probably hundreds of thousands of young men and women with high creative ability, sensitive imagination, and social sensitivity who simply will not consider the teaching profession as a career under the present conditions of poor salaries, low prestige, and restrictions on personal rights as a free citizen in the community. Many who have such talents leave the profession after a few years, as the large turnover in the teaching profession indicates. Some, however, remain despite the disadvantages. The latter, unfortunately, are a minority on all levels of education. Their devotion to, and passion for, teaching are recognized by the pupils and parents. This minority finds the challenge of education exciting and rewarding. The creative satisfaction they experience compensates them, in part, for the disadvantages associated with the profession.

The faculties of our state teachers' colleges and of the schools of education in our universities and liberal-arts colleges need hun-

dreds of such teachers. We cannot depend upon the relatively few who somehow have succeeded, despite the traditional "training," in obtaining a profound grasp of the modern world, and who care about the professional role they play. A deliberate and persistent effort must be made by the national and state and private teachers' professional associations to discover ways and means of attracting to the teaching profession people of high caliber. And such effort is being made. A new spirit is pervading the faculties of our leading state teachers' colleges.

There are thousands upon thousands of young men and women possessing unrealized creative talents and good will. Given the atmosphere of a genuinely democratic teachers' college or school of education staffed by an increasing number of teacher-helpers who are genuinely concerned about the fate of a free society, these candidates for the teaching profession would find it to be the rewarding and exciting and challenging profession it is.

So long as the American schools remain free and independent, the possibility of influencing the direction of modern society is open. The schools alone cannot rebuild society. The institutional, historical, and accidental factors which are currently operating are the "given." But human intelligence, purpose, and compassion are also given. The mind, spirit, and will of man, if cultivated and disciplined by understanding teachers, can make *some* difference. Teachers possessed by an unalterable faith in the democratic foundation of a free society can play a noble part in shaping the mind, nourishing the spirit, and enlightening the will of the present and future citizens of a democracy. This is what teaching is for.

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Some of the more distant galaxies that can be seen with our biggest telescopes are retreating at the speed of more than 2,000,000,000 miles an hour. This volume, by one of the leading young English astronomers, is a popular account of the tentative conclusions reached by modern astronomers. Many of the views expressed have been supported by leaders in the British astronomical associations. Recently, however, there has been evidence presented that the universe is twice the size previously concluded.

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### Chapter Fourteen

## New Horizons

O COMPETENT OBSERVER of the American public school system's development during the past twenty-five years can deny the definite progress which has been made in several directions.

Although there is a shortage of thousands of classrooms and a deterioration of existing buildings, hundreds of modern physical school plants have been constructed. The curriculums and texts now generally in use are based largely upon views of child development and growth which are no longer consistent with what has been learned about the nature of personality development, but there has been a swing to an acceptance of the concepts of the "child centered" school and, thence, to a recognition of the need for important curriculum reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

Major changes in the methods of teaching citizenship can be pointed to as an outstanding example of the shift in methods of teaching. As a result of three years of work by the Citizenship Education Project of Teachers College, Columbia University, almost a thousand schools, in thirty-seven states, are using "lahoratory practices" in citizenship training. Learning the "know-how" of democratic action is the core of citizenship education. Pupils are expected to obtain information at firsthand as well as from books. They make direct contact with people and places outside the classroom. They discover the facts through firsthand experience, and they do something about what they discover. Thus the pupils help to promote action on local traffic problems, help with community campaigns, participate in cleaning-up projects. Evaluations of the projects have indicated that teachers using the project method are getting much better results than they did when using the conventional classroom methods of teaching citizenship. The project pupils not only apply what they learn but show greater knowledge of subject matter than do the other students. The Carnegie Corporation, which has financed the program for three years, has made additional grants so that the program can be carried on for another three years.

A very encouraging aspect of the program is the report of the

attitude of the teachers. An analysis of the reports made during 1951-1952 reveals that most of the teachers collaborating in the project are quite happy about the growth and development they have seen in their pupils.

The development of the core curriculum in the public high school is another indication that emphasis is being placed on the development of the personal and social responsibility needed by large numbers of youngsters, especially since most of them will not go to college. There is a growing awareness that the traditional ways of organizing and presenting learning experiences for the pupils are not meeting the developmental needs of young people.

Recently the "core" course has been introduced. Schools refer to this type of course as Integrated Program, Basic Living, Social Living, Unified Studies, Common Learnings or General Education. Whatever the name, the core study is based upon two ideas: it provides experiences needed by the high-school pupils, and the experiences cut across subject lines.\*

There has been a movement toward the preparation of different and better materials by state departments of education. These materials are consistent with the teaching ⇔learning process we have been concerned with. In the State of Mississippi, for example, a core curriculum has been developed for the secondary school in which three broad areas are included: (1) problems of environment and social living, (2) fundamental skills, and (3) recreation and esthetic expression.²

Another case in point is the State of Virginia. Here the entire program for both the elementary and secondary schools is built

\*The Office of Education of the Federal Security Agency estimates that as of January 1, 1950, no more than 3.5 percent of all public secondary schools had some form of core program.

Ten states report no such program; fourteen others report it in fewer than five schools. Seven states—California, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania—account for 62 percent of the schools providing core programs.

Over a third of all core programs are found in the seventh grade and 30 percent in the eighth. Less than 15 percent of core programs are found in the high schools of the country. Furthermore the combination of English and Social Studies comprises close to 75 percent of the core offering.

around six major functions of social life: (1) personal development, (2) protection and conservation of life, property, and natural resources, (3) production and destruction of goods and services, (4) communication and transportation of goods and people, (5) recreation, and (6) the expression of esthetic and religious impulses.<sup>3</sup>

Another case of a state's taking steps to better its public schools is that of Connecticut. In this instance the effort is not in curriculum but rather in in-service teacher education. Here the state department has cooperated with Yale University and the Bureau for Intercultural Education in setting up a research project testing certain hypotheses and methods in in-service education. In a two-year period more than 12 teachers in more than 50 schools were given in-service education courses which, incidentally, carried Yale University graduate credits. The marked improvements in those classrooms are very heartening.

Aside from statewide improvements, certain individual schools or city and county school systems throughout the country are engaged in genuine efforts in the development of a core curriculum for secondary schools. For example, the Highland Park, Ill., high school has developed the following core topics for the ninth to twelfth grades. How a Person Operates as a Member of Groups, Why Man Behaves as He Does, American Culture and Self-direction and Discovery. The schools in Santa Barbara, Calif., have developed core topics for all the high school classes. Denver, Colo., Wichita, Kans., and Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Okla., are among the pioneers. Schools in Battle Creek, Mich., Wilmington, Del., and in New Jersey are making genuine effort in revising their curriculums. A greater proportion of secondary schools of Maryand than of any other state have adopted the core curriculum. Randor Township, Pa., one of the original eight-year-study schools, has continued its experimentation with the least backsliding.

The apparent success of the core curriculum in a few places has led to its adoption on paper by some of the larger public school systems of the country. The survey of the U. S. Office of Education shows how limited in extent the much publicized core program is.

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Nevertheless, the core curriculum appears to be a step in the right direction. The program, theoretically, is based upon the sounder views of pupil development and more realistic views of the teaching \(\infty\) learning process. In reality, however, there is the danger that form will be substituted for substance. Unless teachers are prepared to understand pupil development and the teaching \(\infty\) learning process, the core curriculum will tend to remain the same old curriculum under a new name.

Certain teachers' colleges are trying to do a different kind of job in developing teachers. At random we mention the teachers' colleges at Temple University, the University of Chicago, New York University, the University of Illinois, and Willimantic State Teachers College of Connecticut and Arizona State Teachers College at Tempe. There are others but, on the whole, most state teachers' colleges remain rooted, despite some language change, in traditional ways.

There are, however, some promising signs for a revitalized educational program.

- 1. There is a wide acceptance of wholesome educational principles at the higher levels of the educational hierarchy.
- 2. The ever-increasing number of teachers who are coming into colleges and universities for advanced graduate courses will probably lead to the improvement of instruction despite the resistances to genuine learning which they bring to the "courses."
- 3. The steadily declining incidence of real moss-back techniques is heartening, and there is evidence to show this decline, slow though it be.\*
- 4. During the past few years, in the elementary schools, the con-

\*We recently came across a pupil in the library of a large city high school laboriously scrawling on a sheet of paper, "I will not forget my history book," two hundred times. We are quite certain that pupil will never forget his history book—or his history teacher.

In another school, which issues modern report cards with such headings as "cooperation," "accepts criticism," "shows improvement," and so on, and which has modern lighting, filtered air, and green boards, we heard the teacher comment, as Mary, one of the pupils entered the classroom five minutes late, "I hope you'll be pleased to learn, Mary, that you and the entire class will remain in your seats after class is dismissed for one-half hour. I'll simply not have anyone coming in late."

cept of pupil importance and child-centered curriculum has been accepted up to the middle of the third grade. The real traditional academic school pressures start at this point. But sounder elementary school practices are now moving up, slowly, through the grades.

- 5. The so-called "guidance movement" is worthy of mention. In most schools, guidance facilities are pitifully inadequate. There are schools where one finds one guidance counselor for one or even two thousand pupils. Too often the guidance counselor functions as a vocational counselor or as an aid to "discipline." Nevertheless, the very existence of such a "movement" is testimony to the shift toward meeting individual needs of children in schools.
- 6. The ear- and lip-service paid to sounder educational principles and practices tells the story of the impending changes in the philosophy of education, curriculum, and teaching procedures. Even the fact that it is considered wise to say one believes in the newer attitudes in education reflects the pressures toward acceptance of those views.

The signs are promising. New horizons are appearing. Many sound ideas and practices are available. Most of the points of view expressed in this book have not remained on a theoretical level. They have been incorporated in educational practice here and there throughout the country. Indeed, this volume itself is based upon the actual classroom experiences of teachers. Materials are being recast and curriculums reshaped.

School administrations are re-examining their functions, policies, and procedures. Supervisors of teachers are critically revising curriculum and emphasizing group planning. Many parent-teacher associations are becoming revitalized. The parents themselves are starting to provide their own leadership for their group. (The Denver groups are an outstanding example.) Thousands of teachers are attending hundreds of summer workshops. We are witnessing more than the usual periodic re-examination of the educational establishments of this country. We are in the midst of a minor revolution regarding primary and secondary education.

The keystone of the entire educational enterprise, however, is the teacher. Without her zeal to teach and her will-to-learn, the classrooms remain a wilderness of wasted logic, however pretty the words. There can be no substitute for the contagious warmth of the teacher who seeks to understand herself, her pupils, and what happens between them during the teaching \in learning process.

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